Evangelistic Sermons

B. H. CARROLL

Wayne E. Todd

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BY

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INTRODUCTION

IN January of 1895, I had the pleasure of compiling Dr. B. H. Carroll's first book of sermons. I purposed then to follow up that work as occasion offered with other volumes, but, while the interregnum has been great, I now have the pleasure of presenting this second volume of the sermons of this great American preacher.

It is my deep conviction that Dr. Carroll has no peer in the Baptist world. Profound in scholarship, unexcelled as a theologian, masterful as a preacher of the Gospel, luminous and forceful as a writer and highly accomplished as a litterateur, he stands in the forefront of the great men of his time.

Perhaps his greatest single achievement was the founding of the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, located at Fort Worth, Texas. This seminary is an outgrowth of the Bible Department of Baylor University, which he established while he was yet pastor of the First Baptist Church of Waco. As founder and president of the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Dr. Carroll has done and is doing the best work of his life. His specialty as teacher in the seminary is the English Bible, and he has already produced rich

material covering a large proportion of the New Testament and much of the Old. His seminary teaching work is giving to the world the results of his fifty years of study and Christian conquest.

It is my hope to follow the present volume of sermons with the publication of another on themes and doctrines peculiar to the Baptists, and later and as quickly as possible to issue in book form his commentaries on the Bible.

I consider it a highly fortunate circumstance that we have been able to arrange with the present publishers to issue all of these volumes. They will come from the press as rapidly as the material can be properly formulated and assembled.

And now, as this new volume of sermons is given to the world, I invoke upon its blessed pages the richest benedictions of our common Lord. The works of the great Christian heroes and thinkers of past ages still abide; let us hope that these sermons and the several books that are to follow may live to strengthen, to encourage, to edify, and to bless the oncoming millions of our fallen race till Jesus comes.

J. B. CRANFILL.

DALLAS, TEXAS.

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I

THE PRODIGAL SON

"But when he came to himself he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare and I perish here with hunger. I will arise and go to my father and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight: I am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose and came to his father. But while he was yet afar off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight: I am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and make merry, for this my son was dead, and is alive again: he was lost and is found. And they began to be merry."—Luke 15: 17–24.

THE explanation of this parable is to be found largely in the occasion of it. This occasion is clearly stated in the first two verses of the chapter. Jesus received publicans and sinners and ate with them and taught his doctrine to them. You understand that publicans and sinners were Jews, two classes of the Jews. The publicans were Jews who had taken office under the Roman power and who collected the revenue for the oppressors of the country. The sinners constituted that class that neglected the temple service and whose lives were externally evil. The Pharisees and Scribes represented the respectable portion of the Jewish nation. They constituted its intelligence largely, and its patriotism and its wealth. They answered very well for what may be called the respectable moral-

ists of the present time. The sinners of the text correspond largely to those who are outrageous and outbreaking sinners.

Now the objection made by these respectable Scribes and Pharisees was that Jesus Christ consorted with two very unrighteous classes of people; one of them had turned away from the love of the nation and taken office under the Romans; and the other was an outlawed, socially-banned class of people. In his justification of his conduct he says that in going out to seek these people to do them good it was as if a man had lost one sheep of a hundred and went out after that lost sheep, and in further vindication of his conduct he represented the joy, the approbation of heaven in what he was doing; that while indeed these Pharisees and Scribes murmured and complained, in the high and holy heaven there was very great joy; that whenever any one of these publicans and sinners turned from his sins and accepted the mercy of God heaven was glad over it.

And over and over and over again, he brings out that thought, his own joy, the Father's joy, the joy of the angels, over one sinner that repents. So that we find as the second occasion of the parable the necessity of repentance. He is not here discussing faith in himself, but repentance towards the Father and the attitude of the Father towards the penitent, his mission being to reveal

the Father. In the last parable, the parable of the prodigal son, and in the paragraph which was read as the one to be commented upon to-night, there are clearly presented certain fundamental doctrines of our Saviour, doctrines which he taught, doctrines which, if obeyed, lead the soul to eternal life. And the advantage of having them in this form is, that they are not here taught in the abstract, but are illustrated in life, an exemplification of the doctrines is presented so that you may look at them and clearly understand them, their necessity, their appropriateness and coincidence with reason as well as with the law of God.

You will also believe that he presents these doctrines not in their gracious cause in the mysterious and inscrutable work of the Spirit, but in their human aspects. The first doctrine taught is conviction of sin. You will observe that this prodigal son, as he is represented here, began to be in want. He saw the hopelessness and helplessness of his condition. In his mind he had reached the perishing point. "I perish here in want." That part represents conviction of sin, when a man no longer relying upon himself, but recognizing the condition into which his own conduct has brought him, sees that his course is about to end in eternal death.

The next doctrine presented is the doctrine of repentance, where the mind changed toward God; when he says, "I will arise and go to my father, and

I will confess the sin of which I have been guilty." Here is repentance illustrated. Repentance is a change of mind, a change of mind toward God, a change of mind toward God concerning sin. A man who has never sinned cannot repent in the Bible sense of that word. When a man sins, in his sin, in the act of it, his mind is at enmity against God, or he would not sin. He does not love God or he would not willfully transgress his law. In his heart he hates the government of God, or he would not trample the laws of that government under his feet. Now repentance is a change of mind in regard to sin toward the Father and is abundantly expressed here by the language, " I will arise and go to my father, and will say, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee."

Conversion or turning is represented by his doing what repentance resolves to do, when it is said " he arose and went." Conversion means turning right about. It is that action of life which is induced by the internal change, by the change of mind; as it is expressed in the third chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, " Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." Change your mind toward God and turn. Let the action correspond to the resolution. " So he arose and went to his father."

Now, when he got to his father we come to another Bible doctrine, the doctrine of confession. Before this he had resolved in his mind to make the confession, and having turned about and forsaken

his evil way, and gone back in a deep sense of humility and of consciousness of demerit, he does actually say to his father, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight and I am no more worthy to be called thy son." Here, then, are these doctrines, conviction, repentance, conversion and confession, not abstractly taught, but exemplified in the action of this prodigal son. And then we have the attitude of the divine mind toward the penitent. We have the watchful love of the Father, looking out for that son. We have the readiness with which he meets the very first step of the sinner in coming to him, and we have the fullness of the forgiveness, the absolute blotting out of the iniquities, when he puts his arms around his neck and kisses him much and clothes him in a new robe and puts a ring upon his finger; and then we have the heavenly joy excited by this transformation of character.

Now, it did not fall within the province of this parable to discuss faith; that is implied; that is discussed in other connections. The precise point here is repentance and how repentance is illustrated and exemplified.

Now, I want to apply this briefly. What is presented in this parable is exactly what every sinner should do and it is what every sinner must do in order to be reconciled to God. There are two expressions used that will show you the necessity of it. One is, "When he came to himself," and the other is, "My son was dead. My son was lost."

Now, what is implied by this language? It certainly is implied by the first part quoted that when a man commits sin there is some kind of insanity in him; that it certainly is an unreasonable thing, that it is out of proper harmony with God, considering our relation to him, and that one cannot be at himself who does it; that he is going contrary to right reason, and that it is moral and spiritual insanity and sin.

As a proof that there is this change of mind as remarkable as is the actual change from insanity to sanity, take the judgment of men who have devoted a great part of their life to dissipation, to all forms of outbreaking sin, and then by the grace of God have been led to see the heinousness of these offenses and to repent, and who from the latter standpoint of reconciliation with God and the joy and peace that comes from righteous living, have looked back upon their past course and said: "When I did that I was beside myself. I was not governed by reason in that kind of life. It showed that I was a fool when in my heart I said, 'no God.' And I said it every time I sinned, 'no God.' I said it when I distrusted his Providence, 'no God.' I said it when I preferred the temporal and wicked things to the good and eternal things that he offered to me."

Now, this kind of insanity is everywhere characteristic of sin. I appeal to your own judgment about it, you men and you women, who are now living every day just as if there were no God. You

are living just as if there was no life after death. You are living as if this world were all, and as if you had nothing better upon this earth to do than to follow pleasure with a species of insanity, to follow business with a species of insanity, money or fashions with a species of insanity.

Take a devotee of twentieth century fashion among the richer classes of this world. I look at such a woman and see how she devotes her time, where she goes, what her thoughts are about; and as you observe the ceaseless round which society exacts, and to which she conforms and which she makes virtually her God, you will see that there is no true God in her thoughts at all; that she does not live at all with any perception of her moral accountability for her life. When a mother will leave her children, when she will turn away from the best interests of her husband and instead of helping him to nobly fight the battle of life, she becomes absorbed in worldly amusements and entertainments and fashions, until she is really no wife to him at all, she is no mother to her children. Is not that insanity? Is such a woman at herself?

Now, for a man of intelligence, a man who has read and thought, for a man to devote 365 days of the year to his business, with no Sunday in it, with no Bible reading in it, with no prayer in it, with no thought of eternity in it, one exacting round of devotion to business, that man is mad. You know it as well as I know it, that a very large proportion of the

men of this town, as far as their life is concerned, do say, "There is no God. There is no judgment. There is no responsibility to a higher power." I have asked more than once this question and I ask it of you again to-night.

Have you ever done this, gone around yourself to the different congregations of this place, or sent others for you, and ascertained how many unconverted people in this town do not attend religious services anywhere? There are many hundreds of men and women in this town that no more come to church than if there were no God at all. Now, I ask you if there is not a species of insanity in that? Suppose such a one to be at last in stress of circumstances, and after reflecting upon such a course, begins to see the vanity and littleness of it and to see how far short it falls of true manhood, as God intended manhood to be, and that man should come to himself, it would be as if he had waked up, as if heretofore he had been walking in his sleep, as if he had been acting under some enchantment, or delusion, or hallucination of some kind, that warped his judgment and caused him not to see things in their true light.

And when he began to think of the utter inadequacy of all the things which he was striving for to satisfy the cravings of his soul, he would then begin to say, "I perish here in want." Now, there is conviction, conviction resulting from reflection upon his past life and upon the folly of that life, a convic-

tion which shows clearly to him that if his existence has any true goal commensurate with the powers and faculties of man, that he certainly has missed the mark. Now, under such a conviction as that, resolution comes into the heart. The man soberly thinks over the situation; it makes no difference whether these thoughts have come to him gradually or suddenly. It does make no difference about the manifestations of his grief. But has he been stirred up by the thoughts of them so that he determines to trifle no longer? Does his heart say, "This course means death to me? I see that it does and I will not go this road any longer. My mind is changed. I see that this is wrong, and if it is wrong I ought to confess it; I ought to say so. And not only ought I to say so, but God helping me, I will do that very thing."

Now, here is the substance of repentance: He comes to himself; he realizes the evil of himself toward God; and this is the conversion part of experience: "He arose and went to his father." What he had resolved to do he did. That resolution ripened into action. It was not one of those conclusions of the mind temporarily affecting the thought, to be followed by no fruit, but it did ripen into action. He not only said, "I will," but he went. He not only said, "I will confess," but he actually confessed.

Now, I will put the question to you who are disposed to think upon this subject. Assuming that

upon a review of your past life in its relation to a man, on a sober afterthought you become conscious that you have done him a wrong; that is the verdict of your own conscience, that you wronged him, then you are making great strides toward moral honesty when you admit that, when you will say within yourself, "I did do that man wrong." But you make a grander stride when you convert that sentence of your conscience into a fact, when you not only say within your heart, "I have wronged him," but when you resolve to rise up at once and go right along to him and look in his eyes and say, "My friend, I have wronged you; I am sorry for it. I ask you to forgive me." So we apply the same line of thought and argument to our relations to God; when we ask you not merely to feel miserable and wretched over your life, to do more than to resolve, to do more than to become conscious of your need; it is to go to God. Go to him humbly, go to him penitently. Go to him and say, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight." No man's repentance can be regarded as having reached its fruition until it reaches what is called conversion; until he turns.

Let me illustrate this. Suppose here a path and on it a number of people walking with a great deal of satisfaction to themselves. They are young people and are not very thoughtful about directions and tendencies, but for the present with song and speech and gladness, they are going along down that road.

After a while their satisfaction in their way begins to diminish; it seems to head toward a darker and more desolate country, and later it seems to lead into danger, and dangers thicken, and at last the conviction begins to seize upon them that continuation in that course means death to them. Now, suppose that they turn around and look back and say, "It is too far back now. We regret that we ever started this way, and at some convenient time we will turn around and go back." Concede more, that they weep much over the folly of going that wrong road but stop at that; you know their death is certain unless they actually about face and go the other way.

I remember a case one night at a meeting I was holding, a man about sixty years of age heard a sermon that stirred him very much, so much that he actually cried out and wept like a child, and everybody was full of hope about him except myself. I had seen the same man stirred that way before. There was no argument needed to convince him that his life was sinful. He knew it. There was no question that in certain hours he was filled with compunctions of conscience for his wrong-doing. But often before I had called upon him not merely to weep but to turn about, he seemed to be satisfied with the fact that he had been sorry; so on this occasion he stopped at grief and died there. Soon after he died in just that condition. Do make the application. Many a time some of you have said within yourselves that there was unrighteousness in your life; many a time

you have said, " I am going to amend. I am going to change my course." But it has all ended in empty resolution. You said, " I will arise," but you did not arise. You said, " I will go to my Father," but you did not go to him. Perhaps some day when you were sick and so sick that all the gold in the world was nothing to you, when you were so sick that you could taste the bitterness of death, you said, " Oh, if I could be well one more time I would turn about. I would go to my Father. I would go humbly, and I would reform my life," and yet when the sickness passes you continue just as you had been doing before.

Now, the object of this meeting is not merely to make people think, though that is a portion of the design; it is not merely to convict people, though that is purposed; it is not merely to get people to resolve, though that is included. But its prime object is to induce them to convert thought, conviction and resolution into action; that is the principal object of it. And that is why we ask people to *move*. I have been told by some that what I ask people to do is too rigid, that it is too hard, that I ought not to ask a man to come up here and kneel down; that there is an actual pain in kneeling down and so remaining for any while. Let us be frank with each other that we may come to terms. If I be frank will you be frank and as fair?

Then I concede there is no virtue in the mere act of kneeling. I do not think there is any sort of

atonement in whatever pain or inconvenience it may be to you to occupy a kneeling posture for a short while. I do not believe that the power of God in converting men's souls is limited to this front row of seats, not at all. Indeed, if you would do what I call upon you to do without taking any of these steps it would be just as satisfactory to me. God can convert you where you are. God can convert you if your repentance is genuine, and if in your heart you do go to God and confess your sin. Your very lips need not move if you will confess it in your heart and if your soul will accept Jesus Christ, why, it will do just as well there as here. God is a spirit and localities have no sanctity about them.

But there is a philosophy, a sound reason in asking you to move after some fashion. So long as a man sits still and does not move that man usually never gets farther than the good resolution. That is the trouble. If he does not in some way indicate the state of his mind the probabilities are, ninety-nine out of one hundred, that he will not consummate the matter; it will not amount to a transaction; he will not close it up. It will be like a trade which he is on but which he never concludes, where the papers are not prepared, where he does not sign his name, where he does not actually commit himself to it before men as well as before God. And that is the philosophy of asking people to give expression, to give expression before men.

I shall never forget what one of our deacons said

on that matter. It was during Brother Penn's meeting years ago. I refer to Brother William Martin. He said: "For weeks I sat back in that meeting and in my mind abused Major Penn for asking me to come up and occupy a certain seat. I sat there and ridiculed the idea of asking a man to get up from one part of the congregation and go to another part of the congregation, and thought I would attend to the whole matter of my soul's salvation better right where I sat." But he added: "I noticed this. I never got anywhere. I never made any progress. I was all the time simply thinking what I would do. I never closed the trade. I never committed myself in any way." And finally, I am telling you this just like he told it to me: "Isn't there this danger with me, that I am prescribing to God where he must convert me? Am I not making a condition with the Almighty? Am I not saying, Lord God, I will repent and turn if you will let it take place quietly, here, but there are some places I will not go to?"

Here is the question: Is that man thoroughly in earnest who is not willing to go anywhere to meet eternal life? I say there is philosophy in what the preacher asks you to do. He does not mean it for a humiliation on you in the sense that you understand it. He prescribes no penance. He does not mean to exact of you anything that will not be conducive to the settlement of this question. It is much like what the lawyer said to the old woman who was always going to make her will, "Madam, madam," says the

man of the law, "you will die and never make it. Why don't you make it right now?" "Why, I am ready in my mind to make it now." "Why not, then, let me draw up the paper and you sign it?" Now, it is to break that very inactivity, that inertia; it is to overcome that fiction of sticking to a place; it is to cut you loose from every form of delay and to commit your soul to do anything that breaks the passiveness of your irresolution and inaction.

To go back to the prodigal. Look again at the case; it is the case before you. He studied that matter over very thoroughly, very thoughtfully, and he reached his conclusions one after another, and every link in the chain is a perfect one. "I have been a fool. I have been beside myself, and my folly has brought me to the brink of destruction. I perish here. I am determined to go to God. I will do it. I have reached the decision and that decision means right now. I will get right up and go," and go he did. On Sunday night I told you that neglecting the great salvation lost its 10,000 where atheism, materialism and evolution lost its 1,000. Neglect, neglect, defer, postpone. I ask you to act to-night.

Now, I am going to try you on your merits, to show you that I do not care about places and that I believe in God's power just as much in one place as in another. The only thing on earth I want to reach is self-surrender and submission to God. If you do that it will be sufficient, even if you sit there. But will you do it? Let us come to the point right now.

As you sit there, you being the judge, your conscience rendering the verdict, is it right to live without God? Is it right to violate the Sabbath day? Is it right to do a thousand things that you know you do? If it is wrong ought you not to confess it? Ought you not? As it is God's law you have violated ought you not to go to him, and say, Father, Father, I have sinned? "Can a man be pardoned and retain the offense?" Ought you not to forsake the evil doing? Can you keep on doing it and be forgiven all the time while you are doing it?

Now, here is my proposition to you to-night. It will suit me as well as if you come up here, if what you do to-night amounts to a transaction, if it closes up a piece of business, if your soul acts on it honestly and genuinely, if your soul speaks to the Almighty to-night and says, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Here is my proposition. I do not want the congregation to rise. You all sit still. While we sing a hymn I ask every man, woman and child here who is not a Christian, who, your conscience being the judge, is satisfied that the life you live has not been right in the sight of God, and that you have sinned, and have said in your heart, "I have sinned," then I ask your conscience to render another decision on a question of law. O thou judge, inside the soul of man, thou arbiter of questions of right and wrong, I ask you what is the penalty of violated law? Does your course mean life, or does it mean death?

We will suppose we have got a verdict on that, and that the decisions have been: First, I am a sinner; second, the wages of sin is death; third, unless there comes a change over me I now am lost, lost forever. Now, when the reason has reached a conclusion and the conscience has passed judgment upon the rightfulness of that conclusion, and there has been suggested the only possible escape, what ought a man to do? Well, you will say, he ought to repent. He ought to reform. You will say, he ought to turn about. Well, we will have no trouble about that, but here is my point. "O thou judge in the soul of men, *when* ought he to repent? *When* ought he to right about face?" Be honest, and your soul will tell you you ought to do it *now, now,* and that no man has a right to trifle with the sentence of the law, and that no man has a right to presume upon delay in the execution of its penalties. Therefore I ask you, there right where you are, say within yourselves: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight. I am not worthy to be called thy child. But I do now confess my sins, and in my heart renounce them and place myself wholly at the feet of thy mercy and cry out, God be merciful to me a sinner! Father, for Christ's sake, forgive my sins."

II

SALVATION FROM SIN

"Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins."—Matt. 1:21.

"THOU shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." To the Jews such a salvation was a sore disappointment. They wanted to be saved from their Roman enemies. They wanted their earthly kingdom to be universal and their power established throughout the earth, and when they spoke of restoring the kingdom to Israel they meant that. But when the angel announced the coming of Jesus he clearly defined in what respect Jesus was to be a Saviour; that he was not to save the Jews from the Roman dominion, that he did not come as a reformer of politics, that was not his mission, but he came to save his people from their sins. It was to be a salvation from sin, and that is the cardinal idea of the mission of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He came to seek and to save that which was lost, that which was spiritually lost, that which was lost in sin, and so he received sinners and ate with them, and so it is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save

sinners. It startled and shocked the proprieties of Jewish social life and offended the national pride to behold publicans and sinners, and "gentile dogs" becoming the recipients of this salvation. It took a miracle from heaven (and as I think, one of the most astounding miracles ever wrought), to lead Peter, the inspired Apostle, to understand that the salvation of God would come to Cornelius. Peter said, "Not so, Lord; not so, Lord." And God says, "What I have cleansed, that call not common or unclean." Which means that God in his sovereignty, and not man in his ignorance and partiality, selects the men to be saved.

One has advanced far who is willing to bow to the divine will as to fields of labor, adjusts himself to the indications of providence and lets the Lord save whom he will save, and heartily welcomes whomsoever God does save. Over and over again does God demonstrate that he is sovereign; that he selects the objects of salvation; and that he does not allow his earthly ministers to prescribe the method of his work. One of the most notable things in connection with the life of the Apostle Paul, was his consuming desire to preach the gospel to his own people, and the emphatic protest of God against it. "They will not hear you. I do not send you to them. Go and preach where I send you, and then I will bless your work."

I am sure that unconsciously (for I know we must be unconscious when it is done) we in the same way

prescribe God's work and seek to direct the channels of his mercy, and as a proof that we had prescribed, we feel a keen sense of disappointment if it does not go just where we said for it to go. Now, let us disabuse our minds of error. Let us submit to the will of God as to whom his Spirit shall touch to-day. For myself I stand in profound ignorance. I know not the particular persons in this audience whom God's Spirit will this day impress. I have quit thinking in that direction. But I believe somebody here will be touched with the power of God's Spirit. And I have been led to this, submission to leave it all to him, and to hold myself in readiness to welcome anyone whom his Holy Spirit may lead to Christ.

I look over this sea of faces, representing many varieties and degrees of alienation from God in thought and life. Absolutely without partiality, I say to one and all, whoever you are, sinful as you may be, in whatsoever social or financial grade you stand, man or woman, boy or girl, rich or poor, great or small, whoever will this day in your heart seek God and look to one who can save from sin, God will comfort you, your soul will be saved. I want his Spirit to overspread this house. I want him to penetrate and permeate the souls of all, so that just as you are to-day, without any other preparation than your mere presence here and submission to him, your desire for salvation from your sins may be at once attained. I do not promise that you shall be saved

from financial ruin. I do not promise that any physical cure or miracle shall be wrought. I do not promise that you shall by any transaction of to-day be advanced to political preferment. I speak to one point, absolutely but one, that if you wish to be saved from your sins you may be saved from your sins. Though the fire is already burning you, though the pangs of hell have already taken hold of you, though the smell of the fire of eternal torment is already on you, the right hand of Omnipotent Grace can pluck you from the flame and quench its heat, and hold you up and say, "Is not this a brand plucked from the burning?"

I would that your minds would come to a specific point; that the object of religious services, the reason of coming here to-day, is not to see people, not to be entertained by hearing any man, but to be delivered from your sins. And if you do not seek deliverance from your sins, so far as you are concerned, this meeting to-day is a failure. If you love your sins, if you purpose to hold on to them, then you will be filled with your own devices and must, according to a law of nature as well as of revelation, eat the fruit of your own doings. That law is irrevocable. Its consequences are unavoidable, and like an inexorable and invincible conqueror, the consequences come to you; if you retain your sins you die in your sins; if you retain your sins you must pay the penalty of sin; and the wages of sin is death, eternal death.

There has been devised no plan, God's mercy has looked to the devising of no plan of saving you in your sins. Do you mark that? I say there is no such thing as salvation in sin, but the essence of salvation is salvation from sin. Nor do I hold out the hope to any person here, that to-day, your salvation can be completed. Do you mark that? It may be completed thus far, that you may to-day be delivered from the condemnation of the law. You may to-day be acquitted, justified, through the merits of Jesus Christ, and you may to-day have put within you a spirit and principle of eternal life. What, then, does salvation mean? Now, let us get the thought clearly before us. First of all, it is salvation from sin, from sin, not in it. The part of it that is instantaneously attainable is deliverance from the penalty of sin and the putting within us a spiritual nature. That is instantaneous. I say that justification and regeneration may come in a moment, but deliverance from the corruption of our evil nature is not instantaneous.

Sanctification, or the making us personally holy in soul and spirit, cannot come this side of death, nor the redemption of your body this side of the resurrection, and salvation is not complete until you are wholly sanctified, body, soul and spirit. So long as a war goes on in you, the law of your members warring against the law of your mind and tending to bring you into captivity, just that long, of course, the victory is not complete. When the victory is

complete there will be no more war, and you are under a delusion of Satan (I do not hesitate to characterize it as a hallucination of the Devil), if this side of death and the resurrection you expect a complete sanctification. Progress, yes. Perfection, no.

When complete, then, there will not be in you a spot, or wrinkle, or blemish, and you will be faultless before the throne of God. But the Scripture is express that the date of this perfection is the second coming of Christ, that blessed appearance of our Lord. Twice in one letter does Paul emphasize this fact (1 Thess. 3:13, 5:23, Revised Version). Hear and mark well his words: "To the end he may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before our God and Father, *at* (not until) the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints." "And the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire without blame, *at* (not until) the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Let us keep that thought before us. Jesus is a Saviour. He is a Saviour in the double sense of the two Joshuas. Joshua the High Priest (Zech. 3:1), and Joshua that led his people into the Promised Land. He is "my Saviour," to lead me into the Promised Land, and until my feet press that golden shore, until I can reach out my hand and pluck the fruit of the tree of life, until I can drink of the water of life that bursts from under the throne of God, and singing

and sparkling as it goes in its clearness and its cleanness, my salvation is not complete.

Young people who repent of their sins and who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, are assured in the words of the Scripture of their salvation, but they sometimes mistake—they think that means salvation completed; it does not. I say your warfare is not yet ended. If you do from your heart repent of your sins and accept the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour, then from the penalty of sin you are forever exempt, you will never come under condemnation, and all the devils in hell cannot drag you away from the grace of God. But I would not have you to believe that is all of your salvation. You are to be saved from your sins, not only as to penalty, but from its dominion, the complete and eternal salvation of body, soul and spirit; but you are not to conclude because you are justified, that the work of salvation is stopped in you. He who commences the good work in you will carry it on. He will complete it. The consummation will come, but many a trial is before you. You must attend a hard school. There is yet a deadly battle to be fought. There is to be a wrestling of your soul against the law of your carnal nature.

There are, meanwhile, delectable mountains upon whose crests God may permit you for a little while to stand, and from whose summit you may for a short space look over the intervening distances and dangers, and behold the heavenly city, but you are

not there. You have been permitted to climb the top of Pisgah and view the landscape o'er, but Jordan is between you and that happy shore. You must come down then from that mountain and address yourself patiently to the prosecution of your journey. To no man on this earth do I say that there is absolute and final deliverance from sin of the Spirit until death comes.

You ask me if death purifies us. It does not. It has never been supposed that it did. In no sense is death a saviour. But here is the thought of it. It is the graduating lesson. It is commencement day. It is final release from the war state. You have known, perhaps, of a wild animal making his den in some dark, inaccessible cave, and from that secure retreat issue forth at convenient times to make his depredations. You try to prevent this; you worry him with dogs and hunt him home. But you may rest assured that until the house where he lodges is destroyed you are not rid of him; that unless that home and shelter into which in time of peril he has retreated is altogether taken down, he is not going to move utterly away. So our body is the home, the tenement of the soul, and as long as we are in the body the subtle law that connects body and soul will obtain, and flesh and blood will restrain, hinder and oppose the spirit.

The last education of discipline to which the soul is subjected is the conquest of that intense reluctance and struggling with which the soul resists evictment

from the body. But when the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved then we have a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, and then, and then only, is any man's spirit perfected. But the salvation is not complete even then. As long as death holds in his grasp my body, as long as that body sleeps in the grave the deliverance is not full and final.

But when Jesus comes and speaks to the dust and raises the body, not as it was sown, not mortal, but immortal; not corrupt, but incorrupt; not a natural body, but a spiritual body, then, and never till then, shall be brought to pass the saying that "death is swallowed up in victory." Then salvation is completed. And it is with this view of salvation that I preach to you to-day. And all on earth that I offer you to-day, or have any warrant to offer you as instantaneous, is deliverance from the penalty of sin and implanting in you a spirit that loves righteousness and hates sin; in other words, regeneration and justification. I cite the ordinance. I ask baptism to speak from its yielding waves and tell me its significance, and it says, "I symbolically represent the first thought of salvation. I represent the cleansing that comes to the soul, the washing away of sin. I represent deliverance from the penalty of sin." I ask the other ordinance, the Lord's Supper, "What do you signify?" "I symbolize that other part of salvation, the work of sanctification, the feeding upon Christ, the drawing my spiritual

food from him, the constant strengthening of my soul by repeated acts of faith, of drawing nourishment, of going from strength to strength, and grace to grace and glory to glory."

And thus the ordinances confirm the idea of salvation presented. I say this, however, that while sanctification is not instantaneous, nor complete in all parts till our Lord comes, you may have if you will, such gifts of spirit power, such evidence of divine presence, such infilling of the spirit through Christ's indwelling and reigning, as the average Christian has never conceived of.

Now, to make the application of this. In all sincerity I am authorized to offer to any man, woman or child here to-day who will comply with the conditions which God prescribes, your deliverance from the condemnation of the law, and I mean that this deliverance is eternal. I mean if you live a thousand years that you will never come under condemnation. I mean also a spiritual change from a state of nature to a state of grace, so that henceforward God will deal with you as sons and not as slaves, and that this justification and regeneration are instantaneous and complete and will never be added to. Yes, you will be delivered from the penalty of sin. I mean that if you to-day comply with the conditions which God has prescribed there will be in you a new creation, however faintly or feebly it may manifest itself. Spoken of as a light, it may be just a spark. Spoken of as a life, it may be an

indefinite time before manifestations of it satisfy you that a new life is there. But the salvation of to-day is the salvation involved in being born of God, and in being justified from the penalty of God's law, which is freely offered in Christ.

Now, I want to explain to you in just a few words how it is. Last night I showed you what was the mystery of godliness, that it consisted of certain definite things: That God was manifest in the flesh; that God took upon himself your nature; that he was born of a woman, made under the law in order that he might, by absolute conformity to that law, magnify it and make it honorable, and by his submission to the penalty of that law (since the law originally had no claim on him), he could be able to transfer to your benefit the fruit of his obedience unto death, and that he came for that purpose. He came to be Jesus. Thou shalt call his name Jesus, the Saviour, to save you from sin.

And now I will try to put the conditions, or terms, in language that a little child can understand. God will deliver no man, woman or child from the penalty of sin who is not led to hate that sin, who is not led to turn away from that sin, who is not led to confess that sin—not to me, I am not your confessor, but to God. And hence repentance means a change of mind toward God with reference to his law and to sin. Should one say: "I am a just person and need no repentance; I do not feel myself to be a sinner. I rather think that I am better than

most people; and on the whole, as I look back over my life and institute comparisons between my record and the record of other people, I place a laurel on my brow and pronounce a sentence of exculpation and of righteousness upon myself. In my heart I think I am rather better than other people." No man can feel that way, and continue to feel that way, and ever be saved.

I do not hesitate to say that God will not save you from your sins while you love them and cling to them. Repentance is a change of mind toward God respecting the claims of his law and our sin which has violated that law, and therefore there is involved in it a conviction that you need the salvation; that you need it. A man is convinced he is sick, and so asks for a physician. A man is convinced that he is lost, and so lost, he looks for one who shall guide him out of his lost condition. And realizing hardness of heart, he looks for one who shall melt his heart and make it sensible to spiritual impression. I call upon you, then, to-day to repent. Let the wicked man forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts. And let him turn unto our God who will abundantly pardon.

In the language of Shakespeare, which voices the natural sentiment of justice in every man's heart: "Can a man be pardoned and retain the offense?" Can a man be forgiven for stealing and yet keep the money? Can a man, even if he is a preacher, swindle his neighbor and expect to be forgiven and

still retain the ill-gotten gain? It cannot be done. Even if he be the most noted preacher on the face of the earth he must turn from iniquity or die, because the text says: "He shall save his people from their sins." From their sins, not in them. The grace of God is to lead you to turn sin loose and to abhor it, to loathe it, as a violation of the divine law and as destructive of your own soul.

To illustrate, if there be one in this church, one member whom I have defrauded out of a nickel, I would not think of asking him to forgive me while I kept the nickel. And the law of God does not call for forgiveness except upon repentance. "If he repent forgive him." It is all gush and shallow sentimentalism to say that one may be forgiven in impenitence. You may have said that you forgive the impenitent, but in your hearts you do not. I am sure God never does, and how can man expect to be more righteous than God? Does he ask us to be more righteous than himself? Suppose, here in this audience to-day there be a man who knows that he has wronged his neighbor. He knows it. Will God save him in that sin? Assuredly he will not. He will not save you in any sin, but "from it." From it.

It is true that we cannot at all times make restitution. It may pass from our power. But there is to be in our mind a hatred of the wrong done; there is to be a willingness to amend what has been wrong, so far as our power goes. This is Christianity: If

you have wronged another and yet possess that wrong, you must, if it render you penniless—if it place you barefooted—if it strip you of houses and lands and friends, disgorge the ill-gotten gain. Pay it back. Surrender every dollar of it and face absolute poverty rather than hold a nickel of it. I mean that. God cannot look upon sin with any degree of allowance. God knows that the wages of sin is death, and he comes to save us from sin. Well, now, you have sinned against God. Just a moment will convince you of it. You have not loved him. You have not delighted to think about him. Your meditation on him has not been sweet. You turned away from his law and said: "I will not live according to that law. I will not. I have my maxims of business. I have my rules of government, and I will not let God Almighty rule my business." Then God Almighty will never save your soul.

That is all there is in it, and there is no more hope of your salvation than there is of expecting that this earth in one moment shall be converted into a diamond. You made your selection; that is where you stand. You will be a brand, indeed, but not a brand plucked out of the fire. You are just as certain for hell as if you were there to-day. Repentance is toward God concerning the claims of his law and our transgression of that law. And if you were my brother, my sister, my mother, my grandmother; if you were old and white-haired, and with only

one day to live, I could not tell you that there is any hope for your salvation unless you repent, for there is no hope to the impenitent.

What next? It is that you do accept the grace of God in providing the means for your forgiveness. He sent his Son into the world, not to save everybody as an absolute proposition, for everybody will not be saved. The idea of universal salvation is the doctrine of the devil. God cannot and will not save men in their sin. But listen to it: "God so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him (that is the limitation), that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life."

Now, do you say that you can reject Jesus and then come in under the head of universal salvation? I ask you, how will you come in? You say, "I will get in through the benevolence of God, the love of God." I ask you, "Do you know anything about any love of God that is not expressed in the gift of Jesus Christ?" Now, look at that word "so." That is a measure. Does God love the world? Yes. How much? God "so" loved it. As to what? "As to give his only begotten Son, that (now comes the design) whosoever believeth in him shall not perish. And he that believeth not is condemned already and the wrath of God abideth on him. He shall not come into eternal life; he shall not see life."

"Oh, but," you say, "I admit that God will pun-

ish me for my sins, but he won't punish me forever, not forever." Let us reduce your theory to a proposition: Whoever in this life repents of sin and believes in the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved. There is salvation by Christ. Whoever in this life remains impenitent and unbelieving and suffers for, say a thousand years in hell, shall be saved. Things that are equal to the same thing are equal to each other. Therefore, a thousand years in hell equals Christ. How may you avoid that logic? It is a monstrous and iniquitous thought. There is no saving power in penalty. What then is the other condition? The other condition is that you do from your heart accept the Saviour.

See an island surrounded with water, and liable to be overflowed at high tide. The tide is rising. How shall a man on it escape? I say that if the man will be convinced of his dangerous situation and will get into the boat sent out to him, he shall escape. But cannot he be saved from this position by believing that it is all right where he is? Can't he be saved from this position unless he gets into the boat? Certainly not. You die there, no matter what you think. Your thoughts will not affect facts. It is death to you. There are some of you in this house so situated, and your island is getting smaller every day. Its boundaries are not as broad now as they were last year. The tide is rising; the ocean is coming; its surf is beating on the shore that narrows every day. It is rising and coming closer to you and

there is but one way of escape. God provides no other. It is by Jesus Christ. Thou shalt call his name Jesus, a Saviour, because he will save his people from their sins. Will you take him?

Now, as I said in the beginning, I don't know who of you are going to be touched by these services to-day. I just know this, that the man here, anywhere; the woman here, anywhere; the boy or girl here, anywhere, who will repent of sin and accept the Lord Jesus Christ will to-day pass from under the condemnation of God forever, forever. And whoever you are, God being my judge, I welcome you. And if I had a brother who stayed away, and if I had an enemy who came, I would welcome the enemy. God is no respecter of persons. I confess that in the beginning of this meeting my soul turned to certain persons and classes, and I was deeply disappointed that they were not interested, but to-day I say to the Lord God, "Do thou designate, and as thou art my helper I will work for the salvation of the one in whom is the sign of penitence and faith."

And all I ask you to do, so far as an external motion is concerned, is just this: That while we sing a hymn you stand up for a moment. When you see that I recognize you you may sit down. What do I mean by that? It is not an idle request. I mean that you thereby admit that you are a sinner. You admit that you need a Saviour. You intend by it that in your heart, not out loud with your mouth,

but that in your heart to-day you will simply think this prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner." I do not ask your lips to move. While there must be a confession you may confess by an act. You stand up to-day under this invitation and it says to God, "I do confess I am a sinner. I confess it to-day that I need a Saviour. I am to-day, from my heart, a supplicant for divine grace, and I say in my heart, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.'"

Now, if you stand up I want you to mean all this. And then I ask that when we all kneel down to pray you will turn the eyes of your mind, of your soul, to the One whom God hath sent forth to be the Saviour, Jesus, and that you will honor him in your mind, look at him and ask him to save you. "Lord Jesus, save me, save me. I accept salvation in Christ." Will you do it? The standing up will reveal what God has been doing. I don't know who will stand; I don't know positively that there will be anybody, but I ask for a demonstration of what God's work has been, what he has wrought in this congregation to-day while I have been preaching. If one of you sitting up here in the choir have discovered that your soul is a lost soul and feel it, stand up to-day and confess it. Let there be a quietness here to-day that can be felt. Let a home feeling come over this audience—a feeling of domesticity, that this is a family of men and women akin to each other, and that we are here on a momentous matter. God is not in the whirlwind nor in the earthquake, but he is in the still,

small voice. Now sing, and now let convicted sinners stand up before God in confession of sin and as supplicants for life. Ah! there you stand! What hath God wrought!

III

THE NATURE AND PERSON OF OUR LORD

BEFORE reading a scripture or announcing the theme, a helpful bit of geography and history is submitted. The southwestern part of the continent of Asia is a peninsula, bounded on the south by the Mediterranean Sea, on the west by the Ægean Sea, the Hellespont, or Dardanelles, the Sea of Marmora, and the Bosphorus, on the north by the Black Sea. Its general name is Asia Minor, or lesser Asia. It has furnished more of the world's history than all the rest of the continent of which it is but a fragment.

A Bible student is sometimes baffled by the varied and overlapping names of its several divisions on the maps of different periods—some ethnological, some geographical, and some political—the last modifying the others as sovereignty passes from one empire to another. For ages its population has been a conglomeration of blended nationalities; Oriental, Occidental, Septentrional and Austral—Gaul, Persian, Greek, Jew and Roman, commingled with earlier peoples in one heterogeneous mass.

The peninsula has been the battle ground and prey

of the successive empires of Persia, Greece and Rome, and of others before and since. Under the Roman supremacy its extreme northwestern part became a senatorial province called Asia, with the Greek city of Ephesus as its metropolis, so that the "Asia" of the New Testament is not the continent, nor even Asia Minor, but proconsular Asia, a relatively small part of Asia Minor. Just across the Ægean Sea is another peninsula, a narrow strip of Southeastern Europe, called in New Testament times Macedonia and Achaia, the latter including the Peloponnesus and the neighboring islands.

Transactions in the small area of these peninsulas called forth, more or less directly, the bulk of the matter in the New Testament, and nearly all of its twenty-seven books. It was the scene of five distinct missionary tours of the Apostle Paul. The first one, though covering much the greatest period of time, is barely alluded to in Acts 9:30 and 11:25, with just a glimpse at its rich results in Acts 15:41. This was his Cilician tour, centering in Tarsus, his native city. Then follow in order the three tours circumstantially described in Acts, chapters 13-20. The fifth was after the Acts was written, some of its details given in the letters to Timothy and Titus. We know, too, that here was the scene of John's latest labors and of all his writings.

Now, in Paul's third missionary tour (the second in Acts) he established the church of Philippi, and in his fourth (third in Acts) he held the great two

years' meeting at Ephesus, in which, directly and indirectly, all proconsular Asia heard his gospel. Among his converts in that great meeting were Philemon of Colosse, and Epaphras, the evangelist who planted the five churches in the Lycus Valley, Colosse, Hierapolis, Laodicea, and two others, meeting in the private houses of Philemon and Nympha.

In the meantime Paul had gone to Jerusalem, was there arrested, passed two years a prisoner at Cæsarea, thence led captive to Rome, where for two more years he labored in bonds before his acquittal. In this first Roman imprisonment he was visited by Epaphroditus, bringing help from Philippi, which occasioned the letter to that church; led to Christ the fugitive slave Onesimus, which occasioned the letter to Philemon; was visited by Epaphras, the evangelist, bringing account of a disturbing heretic at Colosse, whose strange heresy was sweeping the whole Lycus Valley, which occasioned the letter to the Colossians; also a visit from Tychicus of Ephesus, probably with evidence of the wider spread of the heresy, so he wrote the circular letter which we call Ephesians, elaborating and generalizing the line of thought in Colossians, and sent forth at one time from his prison three letters intrusted to Tychicus and Onesimus. And as I think, just after Ephesians he wrote the letters to the Hebrews, exclusively for the Jewish element of the limited area set forth in the beginning of this discussion.

Thus, Philippians, Philemon, Colossians, Ephe-

sians and Hebrews, the five letters of the first Roman imprisonment, constitute a distinct group, which, in view of their reply to certain developed heresies, forms for us to-day an invaluable part of God's word concerning the nature, person, offices and relations of our Lord. Of course, with them must be considered later New Testament books bearing on the same matters called forth by later developments of the same heresies, namely, the pastoral Epistles, the letters of Peter and Jude and all the writings of John. Indeed, we may rejoice that before inspiration ceased, this heresy was providentially permitted at this juncture in order that definite, authoritative and final expressions of the written word concerning it might be given to serve God's people for all future time.

This heresy, which baffled Epaphras and sent him to Paul for counsel, was heathen *Gnosticism* blended with two large and quite distinct Jewish elements, doctrinally subverting the true conception of God in every person of the Godhead, of man in his nature and of sin, of the finality of God's revelation and grace, and consequently fruiting either in disastrous immoralities in the direction of license on the one hand or equally disastrous bondage via self-imposed asceticism on the other hand, and a hopeless subjection to a now obsolete ritualism and to angel worship. Understand, however, that in its heathen element it was yet only *incipient* Gnosticism, to be so developed before John died and in the next two hun

dred years as to constitute one of the gravest perils which ever menaced Christianity. The tenacity of the heresy appears from the fact that at a council held in the fourth century at Laodicea, the scene of its birth, it was yet a burning question, and which in some form persisted throughout mediæval times. And even in the twentieth century many of its evil fruits survive, particularly its Jewish elements.

The name of the heresy appears in 1 Tim. 6:20, sharply contrasted with the deposit of the faith, "O Timothy, guard that which is committed unto thee, turning away from the profane babblings and oppositions of the science (or knowledge, Greek *Gnosis*) which is falsely so called; which some professing have erred concerning the faith." It thus stands "opposed" to the gospel, its utterances are profane babblings, it is falsely called a science, its acceptance by professed Christians is apostasy from the faith.

Like other heathen philosophies Gnosticism must have its cosmogony to account for the creation of the universe. Regarding matter as evil, they would not accept the universe as a direct divine product, so God, who is good and cannot directly touch evil, must shade himself down through successive grades of emanations (called eons) until a low enough order of these eons is reached through whom matter may be created. Their emanation ladder was too short at both ends to reach from earth to heaven. No mere emanation is high enough to connect with

God or low enough to connect with man. There is, however, a ladder which spans the chasm uniting the world above with the world below. Its real divinity connects with God and its real humanity connects with man, and on it a wayfarer, even in his sleep, may see angels ascending and descending, if his dreams are inspired.

This philosophy errs as fatally in its theory of sin as in the remedy therefor. Regarding sin as resident in the body and not at all in the soul, the remedy for sin must be found in the conquest of the body, hence a rigid system of asceticism as a means of salvation. Abjure marriage to avoid bodily sin. Retire from the world to escape its luxuries for the body. Cultivate a monastic life and adopt a rigid regimen concerning food, drink and clothing. Keep the body mortified and thus become a saint. To further this end observe the Mosaic distinction between clean and unclean meats, and strictly observe the ritual of weekly, lunar and annual sabbaths. Or, since sin resides in the body only, and the soul cannot sin, be not disturbed about sin. Live as you please you will be free from it when separated from the body. It is quite easy to see how such a theory of sin might turn as readily to license as to asceticism. The gospel theory of sin is: "Every sin which a man commits *is apart from the body.*" To eat with unwashed hands is not a sin. Not what a man puts in his mouth from without is sin, but out of his heart, as the evil fountain, flow the streams of sin

finding expression in blasphemies, murders, envyings and strife.

As a science (Greek Gnosis) it assumes to reach positive and final knowledge *subjectively* rather than from external revelation—a very portable, convenient, varying standard. Its method of propagandism was esoteric or private, as opposed to Christianity's exoteric or public preaching. Its proselytes were to be the cultured few, initiated secretly into its mysteries, as opposed to the gospel appeal to all men, whether ignorant or learned, and its public profession of faith. Its teachers slipped around and privily crept into homes and churches, flattering the human pride of their converts that they constituted a select, secret and exalted class. In view of the value of private initiation into this subjective, serene and infallible wisdom, its teachers demanded substantial fees, and so glutted their greed at the expense of their victims—Balaamites who loved the wages of unrighteousness. Jude and Peter exhaust the descriptive powers of language to illustrate their infamy. It was not their object to lead their proselytes out of the church, but to establish an inner exclusive class in the church. They retained the form of godliness but denied its power. Vain and weak minds were peculiarly susceptible to their temptations. Human pride, restless under the restraints of external authority, welcomes a subjective standard of knowledge that makes each man his own bible. Mysticism ever appealed to the dreamy

Oriental, and any kind of a philosophy, especially if it offered a cosmogony, was attractive to the subtle Greek mind, willing enough to add an infallible Gnosis to its own boasted *Sophia.*

Thus we see how this heresy undermined in the name of Christianity every one of its vital doctrines. It retired the Father from human affairs, and shut off a lost world from the revelation of his love, thus establishing Agnosticism. It assailed the nature, person, pre-eminence, relations and offices of the Son. In all its forms it denied his divinity, and in one of the forms it denied his humanity. By its subjective Gnosis it set up an opposing standard to the Holy Spirit's inspired word. It broke up the democracy of the churches by artificial classes and smote their brotherhood. It perverted the testimony of the ordinances and sought to abolish public worship and discounted that housetop, daylight, exoteric propagandism by the ministry in favor of an esoteric method that whispered like a slanderer and wriggled in the grass like a snake. It brought about the great Apostasy and substituted a woman in scarlet riding a seven-headed beast for the Woman arrayed with the Sun, the Moon under her feet and her head crowned with stars. It made man either a fanatical ascetic, an enslaved ritualist, or a debauchee. It substituted angelolatry and humanolatry for the worship of the living God. And to-day in some one or other of its forms it darkens more than half the map of the world, and is the deadly foe to all

the work of this Convention. Toward the Father, it is *Agnosis;* with the schools it is Sophia; with the Mystics it is Gnosis; but whether it incarnates in a Sophist, an Antinomian, an Ascetic, a Ritualist, or a Libertine, it comes from the same Devil.

The Devil never had many original ideas, but he is a pastmaster in logomachy and labels and provides more different costumes and parts for his few ideas than all the theaters of time for their actors. He never concerns himself about consistency, but develops with equal cleverness from the same seed thought the opposing doctrines Antinomianism, Ritualism, Asceticism and Libertinism. No wonder when this expression of the depths of Satan appeared the widely scattered leaders of Christianity turned about and focused all the batteries of inspiration upon the Lycus Valley, Peter from Babylon, Paul from Rome, Jude from Palestine and John from Proconsular Asia.

Having thus prepared the way by geography and history, I now announce my theme:

The Nature and Person of our Lord, and His Relations to the Father, to the Universe and to the Church.

This theme is gathered from the later New Testament books by Paul, Peter, Jude and John, and is set forth in the following passages to be read from the Revised Version, American Standard Edition: John 1:1-5; 3:16, 17; 14:8, 9; 17:5; Phil. 2:6-11; Col. 1:13-20; Heb. 1:1-3; Eph. 1:20-23; 3:10, 21;

5:25-32; Jude 11-13; 2 Peter 2:1-3; 12-19; Rev. 19:6-9; 21:2-5, 9, 11. But notwithstanding your great courtesy in extending unlimited time, I must leave you to examine these passages at home, and content myself with just one of them as a

Text—"In the Son of God's love we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sin: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation, for in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the Church; who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. For it was the good pleasure of the Father that in him should all the fullness dwell; and through him to reconcile all things unto himself, having made peace through the blood of his cross; through him, I say, whether things upon the earth or things in the heavens." (Col. 1:13-20.)

There is *one* God, but eternally subsisting as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The unity is in the nature or essence, the Trinity is in the persons. In the nature there is equality—in the persons, subordination. The Son is subordinate to the Father, the Spirit subordinate to the Son.

The Nature of Our Lord

His eternity of being, his eternal association with the Father, and his essential deity are all expressed in the first sentence of John's gospel: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

His Person

His personality is expressed in the word *Son*. In the highest sense his Sonship had no beginning. He was the Son by eternal subsistence—before the universe, with its created intelligences, was brought into being. Before any revelation or history. He himself said: "Before Abraham was *I am*." And himself prayed: "Father, glorify thou me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." To become a man indeed he emptied himself of this glory for the time being, not counting this equality with God a thing to be retained, if by voluntary and temporary surrender of the form of God to assume the form of a slave he might win the salvation of the lost, and then resume his equality of glory.

For the purpose of this assumption of a lower form, he became the Son of God in other senses to be considered later.

His Relations to the Father

These relations are expressed in the words image, effulgence, form, Logos, Son. When our text says:

"Who is the image of the invisible God," and another passage says: "The very image of his substance," it cannot mean less than he is the visible of the invisible God.

To illustrate: Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us." He replied, "When thou hast seen me thou hast seen the Father." And when it is said: "Who being the effulgence of God's glory," is not that at least the raying forth, the outshining of the divine glory which must be another way of saying, "He is the visible of the invisible."

Of kindred meaning is the expression "Existing in the *form* of God." Form is the apparent—the phenomenal. So Logos, or the Word, is the revelation of the Father's mind, heart and will—unveiling of the hidden. Of like purport is the declaration: "In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead *bodily*."

But we must hark continually back to his nature —"the Word *was God*," lest by the weakness of the terms image, effulgence, form and Logos, we account him only a manifestation. Therefore has been reserved to the last the relations to the Father expressed by Sonship.

1. He was, and is and shall be the Son of God by eternal subsistence. I stop not to defend the paradox of the old theologians "the Son of God by eternal generation." Eternal subsistence will serve if any man scruple at "eternal generation." He was the Son before the world was, and of course before

he was sent into the world. How else could it be said: "He sent his Son into the world—he gave his Son," and how else could he say, "Father, glorify thou me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." Here his Sonship is antecedent to time.

2. The next idea of Sonship is expressed in the first phrase of the text, "*The Son of God's love.*" This is by no means the same as His Beloved Son. The phrase attempts no expression of God's love for his Son. It does express God's love for the lost world. Our Lord himself explains: "God so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son." In other words, the Son is both the depository and full expression of the Father's love for the world. The full expression, "*So loved,*" measures and limits the love of God to man. In him all love—out of him no love, but a consuming fire.

3. Son of God by generation, or procreation of his humanity. Said the angel to the Virgin Mary: "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; wherefore also the holy thing which is begotten shall be called the Son of God." By the overshadowing of the Most High this child is begotten, by the omnific energy of the Spirit the Virgin conceived. "Wherefore, when he cometh into the world he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body didst thou prepare me." This is a time Sonship and in order to our redemption.

4. Son of God by the resurrection.

"Who was declared to be (or constituted) the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of Holiness, by the resurrection from the dead, even Jesus Christ, Our Lord." (Rom. 1:4.)

So speaks David in the second Psalm: "Thou art my Son, this day I have begotten thee." This was not the Sonship by eternal subsistence, nor the Sonship by procreation in the Virgin Mary, but Sonship by resurrection. So Paul interpreted the Psalm in Pisidian Antioch: "God raised up Jesus; as also it is written in the second Psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." (Acts 13:33.)

Hence our text declares: "The firstborn from the dead."

It is worthy of emphatic notice that the purpose of all three advents of the Son into the world is *to assume a body*. At the first advent he assumed the body of his humiliation, at the second advent, by his resurrection he assumed the body of his glory. At his third and final advent, he will assume, by resurrection, his mystical body—the glorified church. And all the heights and depths of theology are in these advents and these assumptions of bodies. In the first are the doctrines of atonement, in the second all the exaltation and kingly reign, in the last all eschatology.

Mark just now the second only. When Jesus died, expiation was finished, but not atonement.

The blood shed on the cross must *immediately,* while hot, before coagulation, be carried beyond the veil into the most holy place and sprinkled on the mercy seat to make atonement. See the great day atonement in Leviticus, sixteenth chapter. The shedding of the expiatory blood and its offering before God on the mercy seat was one *continuous* act, so, as Jesus died, he prayed: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." His disembodied soul neither loitered by the way nor lodged in any half-way house, nor strayed aside to preach to lost spirits in hell (a most blasphemous assumption of Dante's "Inferno"), but having passed through the veil—that is to say, by the dissolution of his flesh—Christ entered not into a holy place made with hands, like in pattern to the true, but into heaven itself to sprinkle the expiating blood on the mercy seat. Therefore, that very day the veil in the earthly temple was rent in twain from top to bottom. There could be no resurrection before Atonement. Atonement is the predicate of resurrection. "The God of peace brought again from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep with *the blood of an eternal covenant.*" (Heb. 13:20.) Atonement was made in heaven. Christ's soul was in heaven, not in hell, between his death and resurrection. He was in heaven, and therefore to get back to earth there must be an advent. Hence in the Hebrews it is said, referring to his resurrection, "This day have I begotten thee," and then is added, "And when he

again bringeth in the firstborn into the world, he saith, Let all the angels of God worship him." (Heb. 1 : 5, 6.) Angels had worshiped him as the Son of God eternally subsisting. Also they worshiped the firstborn in procreation, but now again he bringeth his Son into the world as the firstborn from the dead, and the angels must worship risen and glorified humanity. Take not your theology on this passage from "Paradise Lost," any more than you take your theology of Redemption from "Paradise Regained," which stops at the temptation and never reaches the cross.

His Relation to the Universe

When Paul uses prepositions he casts Gnosticism into a fiery furnace seven times heated, incinerates it and with a breath of inspired logic—puff! Its ashes are scattered unto the four winds of heaven.

Mark the emphasized prepositions:

"He was *before* all things."

"*In him* was all creation"—potentially.

"*Through him* was all creation"—the activity of the potential.

"*Unto him* was all creation." He the end, purpose, destiny.

"*For him* was all creation." His the absolute ownership.

"*By him* all things *consist.*"

Note that verb—consist. Having created them,

i.e., brought them into being without the use of pre-existing material, they are not left to persist and stand by inherent law, instinct or creature will. In him they live and move and have their being. The engine, for all its marvelous mechanism, must have an engineer. The harnessed team must have its driver whose master hand never turns loose the reins of guidance and restraint.

And "all things" means *All things and beings*—whether visible or invisible, whether in heaven above or earth below, whether thrones and principalities, powers and dominions, whether germs or developments, whether material, physical or spiritual; whether molecule or planetary system. Their being, their persistence, their times, their mutations, their environment, their orbits, their horizons, are all of his appointment. He leads forth Arcturus and his sons. He looses the bands of Orion and bindeth the sweet influences of the Pleiades. He is the father of the rain and hath begotten the drops of dew. He genders the hoar frost. He exhales vapor, gathers it into clouds, brews the pure water and by condensation sends down the supplies of perennial fountains.

But all this is but the approach to the climax. Sin had entered heaven and earth through the revolt of the angels and the fall of man. The unity of heaven above was broken and the earth below in rebellion acknowledged the sovereignty of an usurper. Then it was, according to the text, "The

good pleasure of the Father that in him should all the fullness dwell, and *through him* to reconcile all things unto himself, having made peace through the blood of his cross: through him, I say, whether things upon earth or things in heaven."

I stand erect at my greatest height, and with uplifted hand, and reverent face to emphasize:

The highest relation of Christ to the universe is expressed in this reconciliation.

We may not dilute, diminish or evade any element of the crowning doctrine of reconciliation. We may not limit its scope to men or time. "There was war in heaven" as well as on earth. The things in heaven must be reconciled. If the earthly high priest must cleanse the tabernacle with the blood of the type, so "the heavenly things themselves must be cleansed with a better sacrifice than these." Ah! had I but time to discuss the reconciliation in the heavens! But this much we may not omit. Eight times in the text we have "all things." Having seen it to mean *all things* most literally and comprehensively in the seven times, we must not diminish its scope in the eighth time. He reconciles all things as he had created the same all things.

Be not startled. This does not mean universal salvation of fallen men and angels. But it does mean universal *reconciliation.* Sin jarred the universe and shattered its unity. Sin defiled heaven and cursed the earth. Wherever there was war there must be peace—never to be broken again. Think

not this infinitesimal world alone involved nor man alone.

Let us get at the meaning of reconciliation by approachment. In an earthly kingdom there is organized and widespread rebellion under capable leaders of a mighty usurper. Large sections of the empire acknowledge the usurper's claims and their strongholds are garrisoned by his armies. There is a conspiracy in the palace of the king. The Son of the king is sent forth to crush the rebellion and pacify the disturbed empire. He inflicts overwhelming defeat on his adversary. The usurper himself is captured and banished from the realm and held in everlasting chains. The leaders under him are punished and put beyond the power of a second revolt. The organized armies of opposition are shattered and disintegrated. The strongholds are captured. The masses of the rebels submit to authority and renew allegiance. The incorrigible are made to confess their crime and are imprisoned for life. The palace, defiled by conspiracy, is purged. The triumphant son returns to the king and reports: "Father, the whole realm is pacified—the flag floats unchallenged over every rebellious province—the people everywhere bow to the supreme authority, the willing-hearted in forgiveness and joy, the incorrigible by compulsion, and there can be no more revolt."

Apply the illustration: Sinners whether among men or angels are overcome by the blood of the

Lamb. Our Lord reigns until all his enemies are under his feet. At the last grand assize every knee bows to him and every tongue confesses. The lost acknowledge their guilt, recognize the wisdom and righteousness of their judgment and accept their punishment. As the heavens where the revolt originated are cleansed by the blood on the mercy seat, so the earth, made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who subjected it in hope—the earth under the curse, groaning and travailing with pain, is purged by fire—and lo! we behold a new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. There shall be sin, death, sorrow and night no more. Hell holds in eternal chains all incorrigible men and angels. And the Son reports: Father, the universe is pacified, and so having reconciled all things by the blood of the cross, he turns over the kingdom to the Father, and God is all in all.

His Relation to the Church

That this relation may be understood, there must be antecedent definition. It concerns our people much to know what and why the church. I define in terse paragraphs:

1. In the divine purpose from eternity and in its consummation in glory the whole number of the redeemed is conceived of as a unit, and is set forth in the Scriptures in the following or like terms: The Church, The General Assembly and Church of

the Firstborn who are enrolled in heaven; The Body of Christ, the Bride or Wife of the Lamb; The House or Temple of God; The Flock of God; The True or Spiritual Israel.

2. This divine conception, according to varying terms, is foreshadowed or illustrated in the Old Testament:

(a) By Eve, the first woman, derived from Adam, the first man, so as by derivation to be bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh.

(b) By the Tabernacle of Moses.

(c) By the Temple of Solomon.

(d) By the convocation of National Israel.

3. This glory church, existent now only as a concept suggested by purpose and promise, and in the gathering and preparation of its material, will be constituted an organized General Assembly, or Glory Church, according to the following steps:

(a) Jesus comes, bringing from heaven with him the disembodied spirits of the just made perfect. (Heb. 12:23, last clause, and 1 Thess. 4:14.)

(b) He raises and glorifies their bodies. (1 Thess. 4:14-16.)

(c) He glorifies living Christians without death. (1 Cor. 15:51-55.)

(d) Both classes are caught up in the air with the Lord. (1 Thess. 4:17.) This is the separation of the just from the unjust (Matt. 25:31-33) and the first assembling of the elect, so that now having made up his jewels, you may discern between the

righteous and the wicked. (Mal. 3:17, 18.) At this time also the earth is purged with fire. (Mal. 4:1-3; 2 Pet. 3:4-12; Rom. 8:19-23; 1 Cor. 3:13-15; 2 Thess. 1:7, 8) in which the living wicked perish, followed by their resurrection and assemblage before the throne (John 5:28, 29; Matt. 25:31, 32; Rev. 20:11, 12).

(e) But the redeemed have been in the meantime presented as a Bride and married to the Lord. (Eph. 5:27; Ps. 45:10-15; Rev. 19:6-9.)

(f) Then they sit with the Lord on his throne and judge the world and evil angels (Rev. 3:21; 1 Cor. 6:33; Matt. 19:28), who are punished with banishment and everlasting destruction (2 Thess. 1:9, 10; Matt. 25:46; Rev. 20:15).

(g) The glory church now assembled and organized—the house or temple of God now complete—it is infilled by the spirit, its everlasting inhabitant (Rev. 21:1; 22:5), so is Paradise regained and the restitution of all things is complete. This is the church in glory.

4. But our Lord himself, in the days of his flesh, established on earth a time Institution, called his church, and ordained it to be the executive and judicial body in the kingdom set up by him, and to be the custodian of his gospel, discipline and ordinances, guaranteeing its perpetuity until his final advent, then to be displaced by the church in glory. The real foundation and chief cornerstone of this institution is the Christ himself, yet so as in a sec-

ondary sense the foundation may be the New Testament Apostles and prophets. Through this institution, executing the will of the absent Lord, through the guidance of his only vicar or viceregent, the Holy Spirit, shall be made known to the onlooking angels the manifold wisdom of God in the salvation of man, so that unto God there shall be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations.

5. This time church just considered abstractly as an institution finds concrete expression only in particular churches, each one of which by itself alone exemplifies all the ideas, mission and powers of the institution, and because it foreshadows the church in glory, has applied to it all the broad terms—Bride, Flock, Temple, Spiritual Israel—which describe that coming church.

6. In its official character a particular church is an organized assembly, or business body, of Christ's baptized disciples, who have been called out from the world, by the Holy Spirit, through the gospel, for association in public worship and for the transaction of the business of the kingdom committed to it. No proper church function can be performed except in organized assembly.

This organized assembly is not dissolved by adjournment from time to time, nor even by a temporary dispersion of its members from any cause, but survives between sessions as a continuous legal corporation, and in its members who are a living com-

munity associated in the belief of what Christ hath taught and in covenant bonds to do TOGETHER what he has commanded, and always qualified to reassemble for such purposes on proper occasion and opportunity till the Master returns or until for cause he removes the candlestick. But in itself alone the phrase a "living community" is much too loose in meaning to define a New Testament church, since the ideas of organization and assembly inhere in the word employed by Our Lord to name this corporation, and these ideas are essential and mandatory, and not merely incidental or permissive.

7. *Its Mission.*—In Christ Jesus each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord for a habitation of God in the Spirit; and as an organism it is a body of which Christ is the head, fitly framed together and knit together through that which every joint supplieth according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body in love.

Besides thus serving as a habitation of the Spirit and its own edifying, its mission is otherwise manifold: Being the pillar and buttress of the truth, it must preserve inviolate and transmit unimpaired that deposit of the faith once for all delivered to the Saints; must keep the ordinances in letter and spirit as they also were delivered, and must in every generation preach the gospel to the whole world.

8. *Its Government.*—Each particular church is both an autocracy and a pure democracy. In being completely subject to the Lord as head, to his law in his word, and to the guidance of his vicar, or vice-regent, the indwelling Holy Spirit, in the interpretation and execution of Christ's law, it is an autocracy. Our Lord Jesus Christ is, has been, and shall forever be, the only head of the church, whether we consider the head as visible or invisible, human or divine, in time or eternity. And so the Holy Spirit, the other paraclete, is the only vice-regent. So that while the Lord and the Holy Spirit live any assumption of being head or vicar by pope, prelate or king, is both treason and blasphemy.

But in all matters not covered by the autocracy, the particular church is a pure democracy. Its members have equal rights and privileges. They elect all officers and hold them responsible at all times for the proper discharge of official duties, continuance in office and for spiritual character.

9. *Independence and Interdependence.*—Subject only to the law of Christ and the guidance of the Spirit, each particular church has complete and final jurisdiction of its affairs, but should duly respect comity between sister churches and should cooperate with them in matters common to all, particularly in missionary, educational, eleemosynary or other benevolent enterprises beyond the power of a single church, yet looking to the progress and well-

being of the kingdom. Since these obligations of comity and co-operation arise from equal relations of particular churches to the one kingdom, and the subordination to the one King, they are *not optional.* True, other churches may not enforce comity and co-operation upon a delinquent church, having no such jurisdiction, but the head of the church will not hold the delinquent guiltless. The methods of effecting comity and co-operation may be left to sanctified common sense, provided that no method adopted shall violate New Testament principles, nor require the particular church to project or merge its own sovereignty into or unto any denominational organization assuming appellate jurisdiction.

Neither the church as an institution, nor the churches as expressions of the institution constitute an organized denomination, whether papistical, prelatical or federal.

10. *Entrance Qualifications.*—The terms of entrance into a New Testament church may be divided into three classifications—legal, spiritual and ceremonial.

The legal qualifications are redemption, justification and adoption. Redemption is the buying back of those sold under the bondage of sin. Its price is the blood of Christ. Justification is the declaration of the supreme divine court that the sinner tried before it is acquitted. Adoption is that process of law by which one not naturally a child is legally made a member and heir of the family into which he

is so received. All these legal prerequisites to church membership are divine works.

It is the business of the church to see to it that redemption, justification and adoption are scripturally certified in the applicant for membership.

The *spiritual* qualification is regeneration by the Holy Spirit. This, too, is a divine work, but it has also a human side evidenced in contrition, repentance, conversion, faith. Contrition is godly sorrow on account of sin. Repentance is a change of mind toward God on account of sin. Conversion (here used etymologically as in Acts 3:19) is simply a turning from sin, a change of course, right-about-face, fronting in a new direction. Faith is the receiving and relying on our Lord Jesus Christ as the Saviour from sin.

The *ceremonial* qualifications are: First, a public profession or confession of faith in Christ, answering to taking the oath of allegiance; and, second, baptism in the name of the Trinity, answering to a putting on of the uniform. We may not omit the ceremony of public confession. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Timothy witnessed a good confession before many witnesses. The witness must himself testify and align himself. The public testimony often calls for high moral courage. It is one evidence of genuine faith. Other saints will "glorify God for your professed sub-

jection." "Whosoever will openly confess Christ before men, him will Christ confess before the Father." "Many of the rulers believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess it, lest they should be put out of the synagogue, for they loved the glory that is of men more than the glory that is of God." We may not be silent and secret partners of the Lord. In times of persecution to be a confessor is to be a martyr.

Consider your case: You were lost and helpless, sinking down beneath the angry frown of God; the storm of wrath hung dark, ominous and minatory over your head; the sword of divine justice was unsheathed and glowing in fiery wrath to sever you asunder, when Christ laid aside his crown and standing in your place as a substitute in death, bared his own heart to the downward stroke of the awakened sword. You were under the paw of the roaring lion—the prey of the terrible one, when Christ intervened, and bearing your sins, became himself the prey of Azazil to deliver you. Would you, then, fear to own his cause or blush to speak his name? Would you skulk in the non-committal tanglewood of reticence? Ought you not to rejoice in challenging heaven, earth and hell, to witness your open alignment with your redeemer? Let not our churches abate the requirement of open confession. Let not the pastors be proxies for the timid in relating the Christian experience. Let the applicant himself say: "Come all ye that fear the

Lord, and I will tell you what great things he has done for my soul."

What if you are a shrinking, modest woman? Does the proxy speak for the bride in the marriage ceremony? And if any woman will speak out and say: "Yes, I take him for my lawful wedded husband," shall she court silence and shelter behind a proxy in the higher espousal to Christ? The pastor may not slip around and surreptitiously enroll members. The church may not abate the requirement of baptism. Let our people here never imitate certain English Baptists who receive members without baptism, or with that which is not baptism. Let us never accept Dr. Schnell's saying in the *Baptist Watchman,* "When one believes in Christ he is *automatically* made a member of the church."

This is to blend the time institution with the church in glory. God is not the author of confusion. Believe in the glory church, calling it the universal church, if you prefer to invent an unbiblical term, but believe in it as you believe in the final advent of our Lord, something *to come, and approaching.* But force neither that church, nor the advent, out of season. As yet it is not organized, not assembled, has no meetings and does no business. Nor are you yet qualified for membership. The entrance qualifications for membership in that glorious coming church, may be summed up in one short phrase: *The complete salvation of soul and body.* The rough ashlar is not ready to be placed in the wall.

And you, though regenerate, are partly a rough ashlar until sanctification of soul is complete and the body is raised and glorified.

These definitions of the church suggest also Christ's relations to the church. He is both builder and foundation of the temple. He is the head of the body. The bridegroom of the bride. He is the supreme and only revelator and legislator. He is the prophet and expiatory sacrifice of the church, its enthroned King, its eternal priest for offering and intercession. But there are other relations to the church, of infinite moment, emphasized in the text:

He is the Firstborn from the Dead.

This means he was the first in history whose body was raised to die no more. Other resurrections of both testaments were but resuscitations to mortal life. It means that the same body that died on the cross was the body raised from the tomb and was so identified by many infallible proofs of sight, hearing, touch and unmistakable companionship. It means far more: That this very body that was dead, quickened, raised, recognized, was the body in which he ascended to heaven and which is now in heaven and in which he will return to his people. To say that Christ's risen body was assumed merely for purposes of identification and then eliminated, is the rankest and most disastrous heresy. To break any link in the chain of its identity is to destroy the whole doctrine of the resurrection and blot out all

hopes for the revival of our dead. It withdraws the demonstration of his divinity, tears the keystone from the arch of redemption, undermines the foundation of the entire superstructure of salvation. It is just as important for us to know what became of the risen body of Christ as it is to know that he was raised from the dead.

The history of Tacitus leaves the glorious Batavian hero, Civilis, on a broken bridge conferring with Cerialis, the opposing Roman general. There on that broken bridge over the river dividing between liberty and slavery the history abruptly terminates. The rest of the narrative is lost, and the Batavian hero disappears forever. We know not whether he crossed over, or returned, or perished in the dividing steam. God's history of the divine man, Christ Jesus, is not such a mutilated fragment. His narrative is not broken. Christ's body crossed the bridge and ascended in the clouds of heaven with the Angelic Assurance: "This same Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven." (Acts 1:11.) And this ascending Jesus was the very one who had just for forty days "shewed himself alive after his passion by many proofs." (Acts 1:3.) And these proofs of identity are thus given by the beloved apostle: "That which was in the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that we beheld, and which our hands have handled . . . that we declare unto

you." Who shall dare because of metaphysical difficulties interpreted into Christ's words and deeds—who, from these difficulties evolved from his own puzzled questionings, shall dare to break the identity of any one of John's closely connected "thats"? Abraham did not so stagger with unbelief at the apparent conflict between God's promise and command. (Rom. 4:20, 21; Heb. 11:17-19.)

He is head over all things to the Church.

This is vastly different from "Head of the Church." This means that in his risen and glorified body he was exalted to the Father's throne and invested with the scepter of universal dominion, crowned King of kings and Lord of lords. All authority in heaven or on earth was given unto him. "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." "Whom the heaven must receive until the times of the restitution of all things." There on the throne he reigns expecting the overthrow of all his enemies. From that throne in heaven he sends forth his law from the Zion on earth. The war is on. The Captain directs from above, and when he leads forth his armies on earth, his young men shall be volunteers, going forth in the beauties of holiness and multitudinous as the drops of the dew in the dawn of the morning. In the vivid symbolic imagery of the Apocalypse he rides the white horse of the gospel, he is called Faithful and True. In righteousness doth he judge and make war. His eyes are a flame

of fire, upon his head many diadems. He is arrayed in a garment sprinkled with blood. Out of his mouth proceedeth a sharp two-edged sword. He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of God, the Almighty. His name is King of kings and Lord of lords. "This is he that cometh out of Edom with dyed garments from Bozrah." He is head over all things to the militant church. "And we know that he maketh all things work together for good to them that love God—to them that are the called according to his purpose."

It means that in the guiding or restraining power of his providence his hand of authority rests upon all forces, latent and potential or developed, whether in the realm of matter or spirit, nature or grace, and brings them under tribute to serve his struggling churches.

Omniscience is his eye. Omnipotence his hand. Omnipresence, Love, Holiness, Justice, Mercy and every other attribute of deity are the servants of his systematic help. *All things!* Flaming angels wheel into line in the dazzling sheen of their glory. Nature's elemental forces obey his will. The stored treasures of coal, and gold, and jewels are exhumed. The metallic ore becomes fusible, malleable and ductile. He girds the earth with their wires, and makes the obedient harnessed lightning transmit along the line the inspiring message: The whole earth shall be filled with his glory. Yonder cyclone that rolls its spiral column into a pall of gloom and awful power

—that throbs with thunder in its coming, and stabs its own black bosom with daggers of lightning, and gores its own dark drapery with the horns of its power; yonder earthquake that yawns like the mouth of the pit and smacks its mumbling lips over some thick-peopled city; yonder pestilence exhaled from dismal miasmatic swamp and stealing with the silent padded foot of the tiger upon unwary peoples; yonder tides lifted by the intangible forces seventy feet high in the stormy bays of Fundy—these all are but the ministers of his pleasure. The wrath of man, the malice of hell, the wiles of Satan, the mutations and revolutions of time—all are made to conspire toward the accomplishment of his purposes. Grim-visaged War attended by Conflagration and followed by Famine and Pestilence, is but the pioneer of mightier missions of peace and health and salvation.

Let the church have faith in him who is head over all things in her behalf.

Brethren, such are the nature and person of our Lord and his relations to the Father, the universe and the church. Let us by faith and hope run to meet the climax. It is coming. Its dawn flushes the horizon. Its splinters of coming daylight already gild the mountain tops of time. The valleys will soon be illumined.

Here is that climax: "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude and as the voice of many waters and as the voice of mighty thunders,

saying: Hallelujah, for the Lord our God, the Almighty reigneth. Let us rejoice and be exceeding glad, and let us give the glory unto him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come and his wife hath made herself ready. And it was given unto her that she should array herself in fine linen, pure and bright; for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints . . . Write, Blessed are they that are bidden to the marriage supper of the Lamb."

How the uplifted soul exults. How bursts the heart of the saved with gratitude!

"Christ loved the church and gave himself for it; that having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, he might sanctify it, that he might present the church to himself a glory church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

Roll around, ye wheels of time, and bring that glorious day, when a great multitude, which no man can number, out of every nation and of all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, every one whiter than snow, every one crowned with joy, glory and eternal life—every one with a harp of praise in his left hand, and a palm leaf of victory in his right hand—every one discrowning at the pierced feet of the Redeemer and saying, My Lord and my God, not unto us but unto thy name be honor and glory and dominion forever.

Louder than the voice of many waters—louder

than the combined thunder of the surges of Arctic and Southern, and Indian, and Pacific, and Atlantic Oceans—rolls and swells, and soars the rhythmic pæan, *Hallelujah, the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!*

IV

COMFORT IN THE SHEPHERD'S STAFF

"Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."—Ps. 23:4.

THE comfort of this text is a comfort against fear. This fear arises from apprehension of danger, and the danger is peculiar to the valley of the shadow of death. So speaks the context: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." To understand and apply the comfort of this text we must first know the meaning of the "valley of the shadow of death" and of "thy rod and thy staff."

Shadow of Death.—Mark you, this is not the valley of death, but the valley of the shadow of death; that is, a valley which to the mind is dark with the threats, apprehensions and terrors of death. Since the text deals with shadow, not substance, it appears not, therefore, to refer to that actual dying which closes life, but to an imminent and ominous hazard of death, apprehended by the mind and well calculated to excite most painful fear. Consequently, the path of duty may lead one into this valley not only in the early part of life, but many times later

before the journey ends. The Scriptures indeed tell of those "who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." The whole of their way was through this valley. In his "Pilgrim's Progress," John Bunyan, following the true scriptural idea, does not place this valley of the shadow of death at the terminus of the way, but makes it an early stage of the journey, rightly intimating that the fear of death will likely be more terrible to young Christians than to older and more experienced saints. But let us learn from Bible usage the meaning of the phrase "shadow of death." It is frequently employed by Old Testament writers, and in such connections as to make its meaning obvious. God himself thus describes the way through which he led typical Israel from Egypt to Canaan: "A wilderness, a land of deserts and of pits, a land of drought and of the shadow of death, a land that no man passed through and where no man dwelt." (Jer. 2:6.) This was the typical pilgrimage. The term "shadow" implies darkness. So Job uses it in cursing the day of his birth:

"Let that day be darkness;
Let not God regard it from above,
Neither let the light shine on it.
Let darkness and the shadow of death claim it for their own."

Referring again to his miserable but living condition, Job declares:

"On my eyelids is the shadow of death." The term implies the apprehension of danger. Job, in speaking of murderers, thieves and adulterers, who love night and hate light, says: "For the morning is to all of them as the shadow of death: for they know the terrors of the shadow of death."

Again he describes miners as sinking shafts into the earth in their search for rich minerals, and despising the danger of going down into these deep excavations to obtain precious pearls and diamonds, so deep down and in such dangerful places that they are called: "Stones of thick darkness and of the shadow of death." That is, stones that you must find in thick darkness and under the shadow of death.

Elihu, in the same book, speaking of God's omniscience, says: "For his eyes are upon the ways of a man, and he seeth all his goings. There is no darkness nor shadow of death where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves."

The psalmist, apart from this text, tells in one instance of some who were faithful to God though by him "sore broken in the place of jackals, and covered with the shadow of death," and in another place, of others who, because they rebelled against God, were made to sit in "darkness and in the shadow of death" until they repented and prayed for deliverance. Then the record says: "He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death." Isaiah applies the phrase to people bespotted

with spiritual ignorance. "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light. They that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." In the New Testament this prophecy is declared to be fulfilled in the coming of Jesus into Galilee. In like manner Jeremiah applies the phrase to the judicial blindness which God sends upon those who despise light and refuse its opportunities. "Give glory to the Lord your God before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and while ye look for light he turn it into the shadow of death and make it gross darkness." In the prophecy of Amos the power is ascribed to God of "turning the shadow of death into the morning and of making the day dark with night." So much of the usage of the phrase has been cited to show clearly its biblical meaning. It means not, therefore, so much the pangs and horrors of actual death as those painful apprehensions of the mind, or dreadful imaginations excited by the real or supposed danger of death.

With wonderful skill Bunyan has woven into his description of this awful valley many of these scriptures. He makes the unconverted men who turn back from the journey towards heaven because they must pass through this valley, thus frightfully describe it: "The valley itself is as dark as pitch. We also saw there the hobgoblins, satyrs and dragons of the pit. We heard also in that valley a continual howling and yelling as of people under

unutterable misery who there sat bound in affliction and irons, and over that valley hang the discouraging clouds of confusion. Death also doth always spread his wings over it. In a word, it is every whit dreadful, being utterly without order." His Christian pilgrim himself finds it quite up to the mark of their description. The way through it was very narrow, shrouded in palpable darkness, shut in on one side by a deep ditch and on the other by a quagmire. Hell's mouth opened beside it, from which devouring flame leaped forth to consume him. Horrible noises of coming demons were before him and vile whisperings of blasphemy were behind him which his imagination supposed to be uttered by himself, but when most put to it he is cheered at hearing the voice of another pilgrim ahead of him quoting this very text: "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." The experience of all Christians takes them somewhat into this valley, and death, whether temporal, spiritual or eternal, is a dreadful reality, whose dark shadow, forecast, announces its approach. Yet possibly among other things the valley of the shadow of death may represent the inward distress, conflict and alarm which arise from unbelief and the supposition that God has withdrawn the light of his countenance, especially when accompanied by manifold temptations and apprehensions.

A judicious writer has well said: "Low-spirited persons of a gloomy turn, or under the power of some nervous disorder, are more usually exercised in this manner than others, for the subtle enemy knows how to take advantage of our weakness and to impress, if possible, distressing ideas on the mind when it is most disposed to receive them. At such times the imagination is crowded with terrible ideas. Everything looks black and big with danger. Reason itself is disturbed in its exercise, and no real relief can be obtained until the Great Physician be pleased to restore health both to body and soul." The older Baptists seemed to delight much in preaching on gloomy experiences. A favorite text with them was Isaiah 50: 10: "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord and stay upon his God." They did not, perhaps, give due honor to the words of Christ: "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness."

We have learned from scriptural usage, then, concerning this valley:

First. That it is shadow, not substance. It is apprehension of death rather than death itself.

Second. That this shadow arises from real danger and possibly from imaginary dangers.

Third. That God alone has power to turn its darkness into morning or to turn any man's day into this darkness.

Fourth. That whether the danger be real or imaginary the pain of its apprehension is very distressful.

The text also teaches that we may walk through this valley absolutely devoid of fear, and that this deliverance from fear arises from two causes: First, the presence of God: "Thou art with me." And second, his rod and staff: "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." The meaning of the "presence of God" is easily understood by his people. They know what it means when the Lord says: "I am with you; fear not, neither be dismayed." Paul was assured of this at Corinth when danger threatened him. God, in a vision, said to him: "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace, for I am with thee and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee." That good old Baptist hymn well and scripturally expresses this comfort of the divine presence:

"Fear not; I am with thee; O be not dismayed!
I, I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;
I will strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand
Upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand.

"The soul that on Jesus still leans for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to his foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I will never, no never, no never forsake!"

But it is not so clear to most Christians what is meant by the expression, "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me," and as Christians are not always sensible of the divine presence, seeing he is only spiritually and invisibly present, it may be well to get at the real meaning of "thy rod and thy staff" so as to gather up and appropriate all the comfort they are able to bestow. To expound this is the main object of this sermon.

Thy Rod and Thy Staff.—We come, therefore, to consider the meaning of this phrase, "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." If we ourselves are to share in this comfort we must know what the rod and staff signify. One gets but cold comfort from vague and misty things. The heart wants definiteness in the time of trouble. Much of our earthly unrest and travail of soul arise from indistinct interpretations of God's Word. Every word of God has a distinct and particular meaning in its own connection. It may not in that connection mean a dozen things. There it can only mean one thing. We may in our ignorance get a wrong meaning, or we may well say in our modesty it means this, or that, or some other thing, but we ought never to say it means all of many things, or any two of them. Because of the rich comfort in it for needy saints I desire to lead you to-day into the understanding of this figure, the Lord helping me. The meaning of the phrase, "thy rod and thy staff," is suggested by the connection. The 23d Psalm is a pastoral song. It treats

of the relations which unite God and his people under the similitude of a shepherd and his flock. "The Lord is my shepherd," so it commences. It was customary for shepherds to carry a rod or staff with a crook at the upper end. This rod had several uses. First, under it the sheep passed, one at a time, on entering or leaving the fold, that they might be counted. The law of the tithe said: "And of the tithe of the herd or the flock whatsoever passeth under the rod the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord." (Lev. 27: 32.) In predicting the return of the Jews from captivity Jeremiah cites as one of the blessings of the restoration to their own land, that everywhere "shall the flocks again pass under the hands of him that telleth them," that is, that counteth them. Both these allusions refer to literal flocks, but in a later prophecy we have the similitude of our text: "I will bring you out from the peoples and will gather you out of the countries wherein you are scattered. . . . And I will cause you to pass under the rod and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant." (Ezek. 22: 34-37.) Here his people are compared to a flock that has been scattered and are now to be regathered and counted. By this accurate individual count every morning and every evening the shepherd could easily determine when even one sheep was missing. By this method the individual sheep was never lost sight of in the multitude. So a housewife, unable to count a large brood of chickens as they run around and mingle, puts all of

them in her apron or basket, and takes them out one by one to assure herself, by careful numbering, that none are missing from day to day.

2. Again, the shepherd's staff was used after the flock was led out from the fold in guiding them over easy paths into good, quiet and safe pastures. Because the staff pointed out the way to the feeding grounds it became common to say that "he fed them by his staff." So the prophet applies the imagery to the figurative flock. "Feed thy people with thy rod, the flock of thine heritage, which dwell solitarily in the woods in the midst of Carmel. Let them feed in Bashan and Gilead as in the days of old." That is, guide them by the rod from the sparse herbage of lonely Carmel to the richer and safer pastures of Bashan and Gilead. In like manner, a signal or motion of the staff would assemble the flock when scattered by a panic. In thus directing a flock the shepherd needs not to speak. He merely points out or signals with his staff. As the staff thus takes the place of a voice it is by a figure of speech said to have a voice. The signal is a command as much as if spoken. Hence the prophet's exhortation: "Hear ye the rod and who hath appointed it." (Micah 6:9.)

3. On the journeyings from place to place the staff would prod the lagging sheep, and the crook would arrest and check them when going astray or into unsafe places. This use of the staff was especially needful in dark, narrow valleys. Timid sheep

are greatly cheered by the presence of the shepherd in time of danger or darkness. If it be too dark to see him they listen for his voice, or rejoice to feel the touch of his staff. The voice reveals his presence, though he is invisible. They can hear him if they cannot see him. The familiar touch of the staff reveals his presence though he is invisible in the darkness. They can feel that if they cannot see him. Hearing and feeling thus serve for sight. The audible and palpable evidences of a beloved and protecting presence are precious when visible evidences may not be had. So a frightened child in a dark night is comforted if the mother holds its hand and speaks assuring words, though the dear mother's face cannot be seen.

4. By the rod also the shepherd defended his sheep in the dark valleys or mountain gorges from the wild dogs, wolves and other beasts of prey that, encouraged by the gloom, issued from their dens to fall upon the flock.

5. And by it he separated the sheep from the goats, or his own sheep from members of a strange fold. The passage from Ezekiel before cited is in point: "I will cause you to pass under the rod and I will bring you into the bond of my covenant, and I will purge out from among you the rebels, and they that transgress against me I will bring them forth out of the land where they sojourn and they shall not enter into the land of Israel." Picture to your mind the Shepherd standing at the door of the

fold, his staff outstretched, not only counting each sheep, one by one, as he goes in, that not even one may be found missing, but also checking and keeping back by the rod a strange sheep that would enter with them, that there may not be even one too many.

These Bible uses of the shepherd's crook enable us to tell its meaning when figuratively used. We have only to apply the imagery to our Lord and his people. He is the Good Shepherd and we are the sheep of his pasture. We have only to find out what instrument he employs as a visible symbol of his presence, of his voice, of his touch, and by which we are surely guided into nutritious spiritual pastures and safely defended from spiritual wolves, bears and lions which seek to devour us, by which also we are comforted in hours of darkness, when the Good Shepherd himself is not visible; by which, also, each individual may be assured that he is counted, and by which we will be separated from those who are not really his sheep; an instrument, too, that signals the scattered individuals to be assembled and becomes the bond of unity and fellowship when gathered together.

Ah! what an instrument that is which is both a key to the covenant with God and the bond of fellowship with each other. I know of but one instrument appointed of God for these varied and profitable uses, and it will be named presently; but before we announce it it may be well to answer

another question. Why are both terms used, both rod and staff, as if distinct things? "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." Not because they are two distinct things, but because of two distinct uses. This statement is not arbitrary. It rests on God's Word. Through the prophet Zechariah, God speaks to his national flock, the Jewish people, from whom he is about to take his oracles, his messages of life, because they rejected and betrayed Christ, the Good Shepherd. This flock he now proposes to feed with slaughter, to cast off and to scatter. Hear him: "And I will feed the flock of slaughter, even you, O poor of the flock. And I took unto me two staves; the one I called Beauty, and the other I called Bands; . . . And I took my staff, even Beauty, and cut it asunder, that I might break my covenant which I had made with all the people."

The three following verses tell that this was broken when Jesus was bought and betrayed for thirty pieces of silver. Then the record continues: "Then I cut asunder mine other staff, even Bands, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel." Here let us interpret. The shepherd's crook is one, but when considered in its relation to God or to his covenant, it is called Beauty; when considered with reference to the unity of the flock it is called Bands. The order of cutting these staffs asunder is philosophical. Beauty must be broken before Bands can be broken. That is, the covenant relation with God being first broken the

ties which bind us to each other in loving brotherhood are necessarily broken. In other words, when sheep are separated from the shepherd they will necessarily separate from each other and become scattered. It is equally true that to bring sheep together you bring them to the shepherd. When all come to him they are together. The secret, security and perpetuity of fellowship and harmony among men is the honoring of our relations toward God. The shepherd's crook is one, though as a symbol of authority over the whole flock you call it one name, and as the means of unity and fellowship among the flock you call it another name; as the law written on tables of stone by the finger of God was one law, though on the first table are four commandments expressing our obligations to God and on the second table are six commandments expressing our obligations toward each other.

We are now prepared to answer the question: What is the meaning of the phrase, "thy rod and thy staff"? It means the Word of God, his promises, that is, his Bible. Good old John Gill, in his commentary on this passage, says: "And it is no small comfort to the sheep of Christ that they have passed under his rod, who has told them, and that they are all numbered by him, not only their persons, but the very hairs of their head; and that they are under his care and protection; the Shepherd with his rod, staff or crook directs the sheep where to go, pushes forward those that are behind, and fetches

back those that go astray, as well as drives away dogs, wolves, bears, etc., that would make a prey of the flock; and of such use is the Word of God, attended with the power of Christ and his spirit; it points out the path of faith, truth and holiness the saints should walk in; it urges and stirs up those that are negligent to the discharge of their duty, and is the means of reclaiming backsliders, and of preserving the flock from the ravenous wolves of false teachers; in a word, the presence, power and protection of Christ in and by his gospel, and ordinances are what are here intended, and which are the comfort and safety of his people in the worst of times and cases."

We readily see how the use of the Bible conforms to the use of the shepherd's crook. Not only must the Book direct us into safe ways and quiet pastures; not only must it prod us when we lag, and check us when we go astray; not only must it on the judgment day furnish the test that separates the sheep from the goats, the righteous from the wicked; but according to its special use in our text it must comfort us when in the valley of the shadow of death. What, then, is that comfort?

"Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." The valley is very dark and full of dangers from pitfalls into which we are liable to stumble, from false teachers, who are wolves in sheep's clothing, from hypocrites and false professors, who are goats; from the devil and his demons, who go about as roaring

lions seeking whom they may devour. The valley is very dark and the Shepherd is invisible. Oh! that we might hear his voice, since we cannot see him. This Book is his voice. "Hear the voice of the rod and who appointed it." Through its precious promises we are assured of God's presence. In the Book we hear him: "Lo, I am with you all the days. Fear not, neither be dismayed; I will not leave thee nor forsake thee." In the Book, through the Spirit's power, we feel him, though we cannot see him, and it comforts us, as a frightened child is comforted by the clasp of his mother's hand in the dark and dangerous night.

When we cannot see him we nestle closer and listen more eagerly for the soothing voice, and thus we endure as seeing him who is invisible, since ear and hand become our eyes. Audible and palpable evidences equal visible evidences. Ah! the rod Beauty. "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." How, again, does it comfort us? It brings us into the communion of the saints. Bunyan's Pilgrim was comforted to hear the voice of Faithful ahead of him in the valley of the shadow of death. We are not only not alone in this valley, in view of God's presence, but we are not alone as to human presence. The Shepherd, indeed, was once alone in both senses; the Father forsook him, and of the people there was none with him. They all forsook him and fled and stood afar off. But the Book assures us of company all the time. The flock are

together. Sheep are a great comfort to each other. And the staff Bands, it united Judah and Israel into brotherhood. By the Book and its promises are gathered into one fold the sheep of every nation, tongue and kindred. "Thy rod Beauty and thy staff Bands they comfort me," but the Shepherd's crook is one. It counts me for God and counts me with his people. And thus again does it comfort us. It shows me how to know I am counted, am one of the elect, and so have entered the covenant. Counted? Yes, Lord. Thou hast not only numbered the heads of thy people but also the very hairs of the heads, and not one of them even shall fall to the ground and perish. Comfort? Yes, Lord. Not only once, but every morning and evening when we leave or enter the fold we pass under the rod that numbers the sheep. Counted in a group and by guess? No, Lord, but one by one, each little lamb even, by himself, and in his own individuality, his very name being called, is twice counted by day.

If a thief break over the wall of the fold by night to steal one little lamb, the morning count reveals that one precious one is missing, and the Shepherd himself settles with the thief and rescues the lamb and bears him home in his bosom. If one poor sheep stray off by day the count at night reveals that one is missing and which one, and straightway the Good Shepherd leaves the ninety and nine that are safe in the fold and goes into the mountains

bleak and bare, and finds the wandering one, and lays him on his shoulder and brings him home rejoicing.

Strange this thought, that in twelve hours after a sheep is missing, by day or night, all heaven knows it, has advertised it and all its powers are engaged in seeking the missing one. Twelve hours only, if God discerns when one is missing no sooner than an earthly shepherd. But we know this discovery is contemporaneous with the event. Yea, he foreknows it. "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." How else? Though the valley is dark and the lion is roaring the Book assures me. Hear it. Hear the voice of the rod: "None shall pluck them out of my hand. They shall never perish." Are you in the dark and are you afraid of being separated from the Good Shepherd? Hear, then, the voice of the rod: "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. 8: 38, 39.)

O Book, thou art very precious when the darkness of the valley of the shadow of death hides the Shepherd's face. I hold thee to my ear. Thou art the phonograph which holds the very words and sweet, familiar tones of the Shepherd's voice. Speak and comfort my heart. O Book! I press thee to my heart when it is sad and my way is dark, and

lifting up my eyes to heaven, where the Shepherd beckons from the right hand of God, lovingly repeat: "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

V

THE SHINING OF THE FACE OF MOSES

"Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him."—Ex. 34:29.

MY theme is the shining of the face of Moses. It was suggested by an interesting discussion in my Bible class on the great question which introduced the Sunday school lesson—"The Good Samaritan." "And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" On a later occasion, recorded by Matthew, Mark and Luke, the same question is propounded by an earnest, rich, young ruler. In both cases our Saviour refers the questioner to the law:

"What is written in the law? . . . This do, and thou shalt live." (Luke 10:26, 28.) "If thou wouldst enter into life, keep the commandments." (Matt. 19:17.)

It is evident from the history of the two cases that both the lawyer and the ruler sought to justify themselves—to stand acquitted by lowering the standard of the law so that their righteousness might fulfill its requirements. The ruler claimed to

have kept the law from his youth up. Our Lord, by a simple test, revealed his heart with Mammon enthroned as king. Instead of loving God with all his heart and his neighbor as himself, he was eaten up by that spiritual cancer, "the love of money." He had hearted the law, leaving it an empty shell, in order to justify himself.

In like manner the lawyer sought his justification by limiting the import of its terms: "But he, desiring to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbor?" By the inimitable parable of the Good Samaritan our Lord exposes his guilty limitations of the divine commandments, and flashes heavenly light on the filthy rags of his self-righteousness.

But it may be asked what has all this to do with the shining of the face of Moses? Much every way, if you will patiently attend the unfolding of the thought. The suggestion of the theme came in this wise: I said within myself, Here are hundreds of young people studying this lesson. How will they understand it? How will their teacher explain it? I saw both Scylla and Charybdis. In avoiding the rock one must beware of the whirlpool. What a fine opportunity for the devil to get in his work! How easy just here to make these children into Pharisees or into Antinomians—equally fatal extremes! It requires little stretch of fancy to see one class going away from this house of God thus communing: "Yes, that's the way to get to heaven. I must keep the

commandments. This do, and I shall live. Of course, one can do only what he is able to do, in his surroundings. The law does not require impossibilities. It is flexible. It must be or none can get to heaven. And, now, as that is the way to inherit eternal life, I must busy myself to establish my own righteousness." Behold the Pharisee! How is he seeking justification? By the law. How can he make his righteousness equal to the law? By lowering the law to fit his righteousness.

On the other hand, another class goes out thus communing: "Jesus fulfilled the law; that's the end of it. It is no longer a rule of life. I am not under the law. I am under grace. Before Christ died, one was under obligation to love God with all his heart and his neighbor as himself. But that does not apply to me. I have nothing to do but believe. Let the Jew try to keep the commandments; they are nothing to me. I am free."

Behold the Antinomian. He denies that the moral law is a rule of conduct. He denies any obligation to love God with all his heart and his neighbor as himself. He sins the more that grace may abound. Both destroy the law—one by limitation, the other by abrogation. The first rejects justification by Christ. The second rejects sanctification by the Spirit. Let us state several propositions:

1. That sublime summary of the moral law: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy

strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself" is an Old Testament precept and not merely a New Testament gloss. Moses is the author of it. (Deut. 6:5; Lev. 19:18.)

2. It is not less in its scope than the ten commandments, nor different from them as some would have us believe, who hold that the ten commandments are abrogated and this love-precept come instead. This comprehensive love-precept is the spirit —the heart—the interpretation of the ten commandments. I once heard a man say: "I do not have to keep the ten commandments. I have only (mark that "only") to love God with all my heart and my neighbor as myself." Can any man keep this love-precept in all its spiritual height and depth and broadness and leave undone the ten commandments?

3. This moral law is the eternal and immutable and universal rule of right—the standard of conduct. It is not flexible. It may never be lowered one jot or tittle to fit human imperfections. There never has been, there is not now, there never will be any diminution of its obligations on any moral creature. The obligation holds over Christian, heathen, Jew and infidel—yea, over elect angels and demons—on earth—in hell—in heaven.

4. But no child of Adam can ever be justified by this law, because every child of Adam is sinful by nature and a sinner by practice. Justification is by faith in Jesus Christ, who is "the end of the law for

righteousness to everyone that believeth." This is imputed righteousness.

5. But let it never be forgotten that the Holy Spirit provides for a personal, practical righteousness of the justified sinner by regeneration and sanctification.

The law shines first to condemn. It can never justify. By the law is the knowledge of sin. It is the schoolmaster unto Christ in whom, by faith in him, we are justified.

But the law has another shining. Faith in a substitute who pays its penalty does not make it void. Every saved man must ultimately be made personally righteous. This is accomplished by sanctification. The righteousness of sanctification is not imputed righteousness. When sanctification is completed, the subjects of it will all be personally holy as God is holy. There will not be a spot or blemish on any of them. They will be holy throughout in body and spirit.

The Bible expressly states the time when the work of sanctification is completed. I quote from the Revised Version: "To the end he may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints." (1 Thess. 3:13.) "And the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thess. 5:23.) "To present you faultless"

(where and when) "before the presence of his glory." (Jude 24.) "That he might present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Eph. 5:27.) "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness." (Ps. 17:15.) "It is not yet manifest what we shall be. We know that if (or when) he shall be manifested, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." (1 John 3:2.)

Practical, personal holiness is thus consummated at the second coming of Christ. Then are we fully delivered not only from a sinful nature, but into a state of sinless perfection. Every saved man will then actually and fully love God with all his heart and his neighbor as himself. But we must bear in mind that while the consummation is remote, the work commences here and progresses unto the consummation. "We are changed into that image from glory to glory"—"from faith to faith"—"from strength to strength,"—"from grace to grace." Until that consummation, no matter how high we climb, each summit attained reveals one higher still—each blessing received admonishes: "Still there's more to follow."

Like Paul we shout back as we go forward, ever approximating that sinless, glorious, resurrection state: "Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect; but I press on, if so be that

I may apprehend that for which also I was apprehended by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself yet to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3: 12-14. Rev.)

Thus does sanctification prove that faith does not make void the law. And thus does it annihilate Antinomianism. But whoever claims to have attained this sanctified state here in this life—before the time God has fixed—simply advertises himself as in a second stage of Phariseeism, i.e., he lowers the spirituality and scope of the law to fit his imperfect holiness.

Now, having stated these several propositions, we are prepared to consider the shining of the face of Moses.

1. *The occasion of it.*—When Moses went down from Sinai with the tables of the law, he found that Israel had lapsed into idolatry. In his grief and wrath he brake in pieces the tables of stone. After destroying the golden calf and rebuking the people he went up to intercede for fallen Israel. So heavy was the burden on his heart and so intensely did he make their case his own, he asked God to blot his name out of the divine book if he would not pardon Israel, as Paul afterwards felt that he could wish himself accursed from Christ for his brethren's sake. In the midst of his intercession he offered that won-

derful prayer, "Lord, I beseech thee, show me thy glory." This glory God promised to show him. Sheltered in the cleft of the rock he saw the Lord pass before him and heard the proclamation of his name and nature. Forty days and nights did he also fast while God prepared the second tables of the law. It was on this occasion that his face shone as he communed with God. Let us now inquire:

2. *What was this shining?*—Observe carefully the conditions which led to it. His heart was broken with grief on account of the people's sin. He saw them utterly lost and without a mediator. In deep self-abnegation he cast himself into the breach, asking to die with them if they could not be spared. He was utterly isolated from all his fellowmen. He was alone, like Jacob, to wrestle with Omnipotence. No earthly food or drink passed his lips for several weeks. His meat and drink was to gaze steadfastly upon the glory of God. In his prolonged communion with the Holy One, his mind abstracted from all worldly things, sublimated and etherealized by self-denial, prayer and fasting, his very being became so merged in God, his soul so rapt in contemplation of divine things, he became like God. The glorious light within him outshone through the forgotten body. He radiated. He was transfigured. The face of Moses shone while he talked with God. Painters have tried in vain to put on canvas this nimbus—this halo—this outshining—that comes from humiliation—deep grief for

the sin of others—intense sympathy for the lost—this sharing of the vicarious pangs of Christ—this intercession for sinners—this supreme altruism. The face of dying Stephen reflected this heavenly sheen as he prayed for his murderers while Paradise opened to receive his spirit. Not the selfish, not lovers of money, not lovers of pleasure, not world-worshipers can ever so shine. It was when turning away from the glory of an earthly kingdom, when turning his face toward his coming passion, when on the night-covered mountain he agonized in prayer that Jesus was transfigured, so that the fashion of his countenance was altered and his garments glittered in supernal whiteness.

Moses emptied of self; Moses fasting many days; Moses grieving over the lost; Moses interceding for the doomed; Moses filled with the God-spirit of dying for others; Moses the altruist he did shine by reason of internal light—that light that is the likeness of God. Let us inquire next:

3. *What this shining emblemized?*—Here we must seek light in the New Testament. The whole matter is explained by the apostle Paul in the third chapter of his second letter to the Corinthians. It emblemized the law-covenant or dispensation given by Moses. That "letter which killeth," that "ministration of death, written and engraved on stones."

But in what respect did this glorious shining represent the covenant of Sinai? Notably in two respects:

First, that shining on his face revealed and condemned sin in the people and filled the beholders with terrors. Even Aaron fled in awful fright from that glorious face. The light hurt them. They shrank from it as beasts of prey flee from the rising sun to the friendly darkness of their dens. So by the law is the knowledge of sin. The law slays the sinner. "I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died." Second, the shining of the face of Moses was temporary. It did not abide. While with God, he would shine. But after coming out from the divine presence, the glory of his face would gradually fade away. So lingering sunbeams, when the sun goes down, may flush the skies for a while, but soon give place to duskiness and gloom. For while Paul declares "that the children of Israel could not look steadfastly upon the face of Moses for the glory of his face," he yet adds: "Which glory was passing away." So his covenant waxed old and vanished.

The greater glory of the New Covenant which succeeded eclipsed its light as feeble stars, however brilliant by night, fade into invisibility when the sun rises in his splendor. The law came by Moses, but grace and truth by Jesus Christ. The law, as a covenant, "gendered to bondage," but "life and immortality were brought to light by the gospel." In sharp contrast does Paul, in his letter to the Romans, place the "do and live" of Moses with the "believe and live" of Jesus Christ. Do let his words in the

10th chapter of that letter sink down into your hearts. "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they may be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise; . . . That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

This is why I did not desire any student of this school to mistake the meaning of our Lord's direction to the lawyer and the young ruler. He used the law to discover their hearts to them. To show them they were lost sinners. It is now appropriate to inquire:

4. *What did the veil emblemize which Moses put over his face to hide its glory?*—It emblemized the blindness of Israel and their hardness of heart. They thought the shining of the face of Moses was perpetual. He had learned that it would soon fade away. So, that they might not see the end of that glorious light, he veiled his face that they might not

see it vanish. Paul expressly says: "Moses put a veil on his face, that the children of Israel should not look steadfastly on the end of that which was passing away." (Revision.) They were not prepared to see that light expire. They were not ready to receive the greater light. "For," says Paul, "until this very day at the reading of the old covenant, the same veil is uplifted—unto this day whensoever Moses is read, a veil lieth upon their hearts." They think the light is still there. They think if the veil were only lifted the face of Moses would shine now as when on Sinai he talked with God. Ah! how sad, how sad! to see this ancient people worshiping an empty veil, back of which is now no face and no light. The Old Covenant as a way of life is vanished. Gone nearly two thousand years ago. Its glory is perished. And yet they gather around the veiled emptiness and talk of the light that must there be hidden. God in mercy let down that curtain that they might not witness in anguish the last expiring spark. But when they will turn to the Lord, that greater than Moses, whose covenant, as a way of life, is founded on better blood, better promises, a better surety, then will that veil on their hearts be removed. Then will they find a shining which never dies but waxes brighter and brighter forever. Then they all, as Christians, "with unveiled face, reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, will be transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit." This last verse

of the third chapter of the second Corinthians is a wonderful scripture.

Historians tell us that the ancient Incas of Peru had, at Cuzco, a wonderful temple of the sun. It consisted of three walls only and had no roof. The walls were north, west and south. It was open towards the east. The west end was covered with hammered gold—a mirror of smoothly polished gold. Just before dawn the worshipers would stand in the open, east end of the temple and face the golden mirror. When the sun rose above the horizon its beams of light would fall upon the mirrored wall of the west end, which would reflect its golden light on the upturned faces of the worshipers and crown them with an aureole—his own image. But this scripture seems to make the Christian the mirror, placed before Christ the Sun of righteousness, until it catches and reflects his image. Or, to vary the figure, the Christian is an unshapely block of marble, placed before a perfect model, so that the sculptor may shape it from glory to glory until it is the express image of the model. There remains to be considered one practical reflection, suggested by the fact stated in the text:

5. "*Moses wist not his face was shining.*"—That is, he was so absorbed in God, so lost to self, so wrapped in contemplation of heavenly glory, he was unconscious of the majesty and dignity and glory of his own appearance. The Lord God was "the health of his countenance," but he himself did not

know how luminously "the beauty of holiness" was crowning him. How suggestive this fact. And how valuable the suggestion. Let us mark it down so we may not forget it: When we become conscious of our shining we cease to shine! When we begin to reflect with complacency upon our gifts and endowments they lose their virtue. The charm is broken. No one, however beautiful, can seem beautiful while vainly conscious of beauty. But when one, like Moses, forgets himself, denies himself, enters into and appropriates another's woes by tender sympathy, when looking out of self, he becomes absorbed in prayer, in God, then that face, however homely in features, takes on a glorious beauty. One airy, conceited smirk will spoil the charms of the fairest belle. One penitential tear out-glitters a pearl. One tender grasp of a loving, helping hand, however hard or scarred with toil, will make it shapelier in God's sight than any Beau Brummell's soft, kid-covered fingers.

Moses wist not his face was shining. Oh, this sweet, unconscious light, how beautiful it is! That is why, at the judgment, the humble, self-forgetful saints will be startled at the Saviour's plaudit, and begin to inquire: "Lord, when did we see thee sick, hungry, cold, naked and ministered unto thee?" They have forgotten their goodness. But heaven remembers. O ye modest violets that unconsciously fill the earth with fragrance; ye, ye are the light of the world.

VI

WATCH, WORK, WAR

"For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded: and he that sounded the trumpet was by me."—Neh. 4:18.

THERE are no more interesting and no more profitable themes of study recorded in all the annals of time than God's dealings with the Jews. He had assured them that if they kept his laws he would prosper them and give them their land forever, but if they transgressed his commandments that he would send them away into captivity. First, the ten tribes went into captivity and their vacated country was peopled by imported mongrel hordes, afterwards known as Samaritans. Later the kingdom of Judah, except a miserable remnant, was borne away in a similar ruin and God said they should be captives for seventy years.

Now, one of the captives in that strange land of Babylon heard through visiting brethren from Jerusalem of the condition of the few people that were left in the land of Judah, that they were in great affliction and under great reproach, and that the walls of the city were destroyed and they were at the mercy of their enemies. It caused him great

affliction. He sat down and wept and fasted and prayed for many days and nights. And he implored God to grant him favor, that he might be the means of rebuilding that city and re-establishing that banished people, and in order to this that God would give him favor in the sight of the Persian monarch, which dynasty had overthrown the dynasty of Nebuchadnezzar, who had led them away captive. So he went before this king and stated his case. The king heard it. He granted him permission to go back and rebuild the city. He gave him letters to the governors of the provinces lying between Babylon or Shushan and Jerusalem. He assisted him in other ways.

When he reached Jerusalem he found matters to the last degree desperate and deplorable. Outside of almost irreparable internal disaster, he found the mongrel Samaritans allied with Israel's ancient enemies. This coalition not only rejoiced in the downfall of Jerusalem but also conspired to perpetuate its desolation. So vigilant were their efforts against its restoration and so watchful of him that he had to survey the ruins by night. And his heart bled at the expanse of those ruins, doubly horrible when viewed at night, and the apparently hopeless undertaking of the restoration. Nevertheless he called the remnant of the people around him and set forth his great purpose.

I shall not recount the various steps that were taken in the successful re-establishment of the city

of Jerusalem, which then stood until its destruction by Titus in the year 70. But my object is to call your attention to a number of analogous thoughts suggested by this subject. The first is this: The desolation of Jerusalem is parallel to the ruin that comes to the backslider, the one who turns away from God. That road does not lead to any good or to any fruitful end. Very heavy will be the hand of God upon any child of his that turns away from the Lord's covenant. If indeed you were ever a child of God and now backslidden, your backsliding followed well-established laws of decline. The backsliding always starts in the heart. Your love begins to wax cold, and with the wane of your love there come doubt and distrust of God, then open wickedness, and you may go so far off finally that, in your own conception of your situation, it is a hopeless, desolate and ruined estate. But what are the means of recovery? How is the restoration ever brought about, whether in the case of an individual, or of a church, or of a nation? The means of recovery are easy to understand; they are difficult to practice. First of all, the mind should be profoundly penetrated with the fact of the sin which you committed against God. You should be so convinced of this that it will cause you to weep, to fast, to pray, "O God, we confess our sins. We have been forgetful of thee. We now loathe and abhor in our minds the things that separated between us and thee." I say this is the first step, that the mind should be convicted,

deeply and solemnly convicted of the sin that had been committed.

Now, just here I have a word of comfort for you. I do not believe that any people, or any individual, or any nation, ever became penetrated with this conviction of sin, so much so that it took away joy and appetite, and led to humiliation, fasting, prayer, confession—I do not believe it ever occurred in any case in the world without God instantly hearing it. Your difficulty will be this: The way back to righteousness will seem an impossible way. The difficulties will, as you look at them, be higher than mountains. They will seem to be insuperable. See the matter illustrated in this historic parallel. Now, what reasonable hope could this man have that his request would be granted when he went to a heathen king and asked permission to be gone from his bondage for twelve years, and asked that king to give him letters to his governors and to aid him with money and in all other ways?

What reasonable hope was there that this king would grant such request? There was only one power able to turn the heart of that king. That was the power of God. And so he knelt down and prayed for that thing. "O Lord, I pray this prayer. I am the cupbearer of this king. I pray thee to incline the heart of this king to grant my request." Do you believe in prayer? Do you believe that prayer will accomplish such a result as that, that the heart of an idolater, of a heathen, could by the power of God

be so turned as to grant a request of that kind? That was the first encouragement that came to this man's heart. He asked God for a certain specific thing. God gave him just exactly what he asked for. That grant became a prophecy of ultimate success in all of his undertakings.

But, now, when he got down to Jerusalem and rode out at night, not being permitted to take a survey of that place in the daytime, rode out at night through the solitariness and the desolation, through the dust and the débris of the overturned walls, how his heart sank within him. "Can I rebuild these walls? Is there any way by which it can be done? The people here are few and what is their condition?" Do consider it attentively. In the first place, those of them that remained were not the best people of the land. They were the remnants. In the second place, they were hopelessly in debt. In the next place, their homes were mortgaged for borrowed money. In the next place, a great number of them had already incurred a degree of debt that under the existing law would sell their children into bondage. That was their condition. They were cowed also by two generations of bondage. And now he had to gather that burdened and broken-spirited crowd together and rebuild the city. He got them together and stated to them what was in his heart and what reason he had for hoping that the thing could be done, that it was feasible, and what

proofs had occurred up to that day to show them it could be done.

Behold the second miraculous result: that feeble folk gathered about him and commenced to do this work. What was their next difficulty? I stated that there were those near them interested in their failure, pledged to see them fail, and that from the beginning of their work to the end of it they were covered with ridicule; their small beginnings were despised. They were mocked and jeered as they toiled in the rubbish of those old walls and sought to rebuild and fortify that place. Not only cruel scorn, but there were constant threats of active interference. "If you attempt to build these walls we will smite you." The ever hostile children of Lot and Ishmael with the Samaritans, that mongrel and godless crew that had been shipped there to take the place of the children of Israel transported into Babylon, they never wanted to see that temple restored or that city rebuilt.

Now, under these threats what did this man do? The text says they had to do three things at once: first, to watch; second, to war; and third, to work. To watch, to war and to work. When they builded they kept their swords by their sides. The bugler stood ready to blow a blast upon his trumpet to announce the approach of the enemy. There was need for ceaseless vigilance, by day and by night, lest suddenly they should be surprised and all that they had done should be swept away.

Now, let us inquire, are these hard conditions favorable to success? In your Sunday-school lesson this morning, and particularly in the lessons which preceded and are connected with it, watchfulness is continually enjoined, as in the parable of the ten virgins. Perhaps you think that is as much as a man can do well at one time. "Can I be wakeful enough? Can I be vigilant? Can I all the time be in an attitude of readiness?" If you have ever studied the histories of wars you find that the most difficult part of all service is the watching service, when you are out on the picket, when you are stationed as a sentinel, and all through the dark hours of the night, while others sleep, to be vigilant, listening to every sound, catching sight of every passing object, and being ready at a moment's warning to alarm the camp; to watch with due vigilance is, indeed, one of the most difficult things to be performed.

But if one's mind is diverted to an external enemy, how can he work, and work in the right way? We find building hard work if we have nothing else to do; quarrying out the stones, bringing them to the right place, applying the mortar, and carrying up the wall with precision—a huge, difficult undertaking, just to work, and to work that sort of work. But to both watch and work, and then in addition to be compelled by relentless enmity to take a trowel in one hand and a sword in the other, and work a while and fight a while—to watch, and to work and

to war. I asked you just now if these conditions were favorable to success, and perhaps my answer to the question will surprise you somewhat. Those were the best conditions in the world for the development of true character. We are so constituted that we do not derive hardiness without great endurance. We do not attain to courage without having that courage tested. We do not attain to strength without exercise and without discipline, and I venture to say that the people that worked under those conditions, by the time those walls were built, had become a veteran people. Whoever is placed under conditions where every faculty of his being has to be on the alert all the time; where he is conscious of the presence of an insidious, treacherous enemy; where he is conscious of the magnitude of the labor to be performed, and that he must not allow the spirit of slumber to benumb his powers, that one is bound to become great; as the winds, by blowing from different points of the compass against the tree, bending it first this way, then that way and anon another way, cause it to reach out with its roots and take firmer hold on the ground, and it is thus rendered a tough, sturdy, strong, well-developed tree, so human character under similar disciplinary conditions attains to its highest excellence.

Let us notice the next point in this reformation. No great reformation is ever attained unless the ones who are conducting it forget, absolutely blot out of their mind, any thought of respect of persons,

all feelings of favoritism, of partial inclinations, and leaving men out altogether, hew to the line in presenting the law of God. And so this man did with these usurers who were fattening upon the poverty of the people, who had already eaten up their substance and thrown the black shadow of mortgage over their land and the threat of slavery over their children. He went to them and he said: "Are you patriots? Do you love your country? Do you fear God? Is it important that this work shall succeed? Then take from these people this crushing burden which you have put upon them, and let them work with a free heart while they thus undertake the work of the Lord."

Now, what reasonable hope did this man have, what could he have, that a request of that kind would be heeded? It seems more foolhardy than asking the heathen king to give him permission to restore Jerusalem and otherwise help him, now to gather a company of money-lenders together, capitalists, and say to these men, whose hearts had become harder than the nether millstone, "In the name of God I command you to be merciful to these people." And yet he prayed to God that these people might hear him, and that they might be inclined to do what he asked them to do. And it is a fact, and so recorded, and without an exception, that every one of them did just what he asked them to do. What other miracle can be compared with this miracle? Now, if faith in God can remove a moun-

tain of that kind, where is there a higher or mightier mountain to be taken out of the way, when God's cause needs it to be done, needs to be pushed on to victory and to success?

But there was yet another thing. That whole generation had lost sight of the law of God. The books of the law had become lost. There were grown men and women that did not know what the law of God was. And how can there be righteousness unless there be an accepted standard defining the right and prohibiting the wrong? So his next step was this: "I call upon you people now that you have finished your wall, that stands now, I call upon you people to gather together and hear the Word of God." And they came, men, women and children. It never happened before; I don't suppose it has ever happened since; I do not know that it will ever happen again in the history of the world; but there was a whole people, every father and mother and every child that could understand. They came there in great crowds and stood up all day around a pulpit of wood (and this is the only place in the Bible where the word "pulpit" is mentioned), from which the man of God read the Word of God, all that had been enjoined. He read it very slowly and very distinctly, and then he and his co-laborers gave the sense of it, interpreted it so that the little children could understand what it was; and as that Word was read and expounded to them, a strange scene followed. The people began to groan, and now and then to sob,

and then tears began to fall down their faces, and they became penetrated with the sense of sin. They saw that in their ignorance they had been doing a great many things that God had forbidden, and the light of the law was shining down into their hearts, and the entrance of God's Word always giveth light.

There is nothing, no instrument that ever yet has been employed, so potent in piercing to the dividing asunder of the joints and of the marrow, and of discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart, as the Word of God. And there is no famine comparable to a dearth of the Word of God. And so in any great reformation of any kind, where there are watching and warring and working, there must be recourse to an infallible oracle, whose dictum is decisive, and from whose decision there is no appeal, there must be recourse to God's holy Word; that all the people shall hear it; and see that it is binding on the father and binding on the mother and the brother and sister and little children.

But now mark. When that Word was read it revealed other difficulties. That Word declared: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." And here the richest and the greatest of the people were accustomed to go on with their work on God's day just as on any other day. Now, who would have the courage to go to these men and say, "You shall not gather the grapes, you shall not put them in the vat; nor extract their juice; nor shall you convert them into wine; nor shall you reap your grain, nor

shall you grind it into flour, on the Lord's day. You shall not bargain and traffic; you shall not violate the obligation that comes down from creation." Well may you say, "Will the people listen to that?" They did on this occasion. That word of God was convincing to these men and these women, and when that man came to enforce conformity to God's law as the only means of recovery from their backslidden condition (for penitence is never a soft road, it climbs hills and difficulties that seem utterly unattainable to human endeavor), in this case that man went before them, making no apologies for their departure from the divine truth. Nor did he flatter them with lies. He did not compromise the matters at issue, but without any fear of man before his eyes he held up the law of God as supreme. Obedience to this law is life and disobedience is death. You cannot have the divine favor; you cannot be restored, if you disregard the divine commandments. And that reformation was accomplished.

But as he went on expounding the Word of God he came to the question of marriage, and of all the things that governments have found to be difficult, least yielding to any human argument, least restrained by any human penalty, the most difficult of all human matters to regulate, is this matter of marriage. And hence in every nation where worldly wisdom prevails you will see that there is a yielding to the appetites of the people upon this question. As in this case they said, "What are you about to

do? Here is a man with two wives. Which one shall he retain? And then here are the children? Another indeed has one wife only but she is unlawfully his wife. What can you do about that? He says, "I make no compromise with any of these complications. Here is the Word of God. That is truth. That is life. That must stand. And no matter what it costs, no matter what it overturns, it is imperative that God's Word be obeyed." Well, could that be done? Will not the people revolt? You saw the heathen king's heart turned. You saw the contempt and treachery and hostility of their enemies disarmed. You saw a debt-laden people, whose lands were mortgaged and whose children were bound to slavery, released by the class of men who of all others show the least deference to the requirements of God's Word. And then you saw where love of money was wrapped up in disobedience of God's commandment with reference to the Sabbath day, and you saw that yield.

Now, shall it fail when it comes to the question of marriage? It did not fail there. The result of it was that Jerusalem was rebuilt. Her walls became impregnable. They could not be successfully assailed by any force that could be brought against them from the outside. They would stand forever if the garrison remained true. And peace came. And what a glorious revolution was wrought. The valleys that had seemed as if stricken by lightning and scarred by fire, these valleys again blossomed

like the rose, the hillsides were covered with the clustering grapevines, and from the summits of the mountains to the bottoms of the gorges, the land which had re-acknowledged its God, the land which sterility had cursed under sin, that land responded to the people of piety and of prayer, and once more put forth abundant fruit, until the whole of it looked like the garden of the Lord. And here were happy families, happy children, happy fathers and mothers. Thieves, robbers and murderers were expelled, and all over the country law and order reigned and the voice of prayer and the voice of praise were heard.

Now, I want to say to you that there can never be any restoration of your souls to the divine favor by any different road than is indicated by the principles set forth in this case. There must be the conviction of sin. There must be abhorrence of it. There must be a recurrence to God's Word as the supreme and only and all-sufficient law which defines right and wrong. There must be a determination to abide the decision of that word, cost what it may. And there must come a courage into your heart that will not be intimidated by any threat from an outside enemy, and there must be a moral courage that will enable you to support yourself under this derision and contempt, so that in every aspect of it you may say, "I am God's. I belong to him. I will do what he tells me to do."

What then if these men did have to watch and work and war, at the same time? It was a mag-

nificent education that produced a hardy and vigorous and successful generation. Oftentimes we deplore the very circumstances that rightly used go to our upbuilding, and oftentimes we long for just that condition which if God should give it to us would enervate us, would take the strength out of our hands and courage out of our hearts and patience out of our souls. Let no man, then, complain of hard work. It is from the realms of difficulty and poverty and straitened circumstances that the really great ones of this earth emerge. It is where the people toil; it is where they live with difficulties as their bedfellows, it is where, without external human aid, that innate manhood, magnetized under the Spirit of God, rises up and asserts itself, and welcomes foes from without and fears from within, and successfully overcomes all.

I need refer to only one circumstance more in connection with this case. Right at the critical time when at every moment they expected the invading army to come and assail their unfinished walls, when there were breaches yet that had not been repaired, when the gates had not been hung, there came a man who claimed to be a brother, with a message: "You are all to be put to death. Your only safety is to go yonder into the holy place and shut yourselves up." Our hero replied to him, "Who am I that I should fear the face of man? I will not go and shut myself up." And so he took his position right in the greatest breach in the wall, took his stand

right there. "Let the enemy come. I will not hide. I will not be enticed from this great work in which I am engaged. I make it my chief concern. I put it above all other matters. I allow no other matter to divert my attention or to diminish the importance of this. Here God put me and here, if need be, I will die in the discharge of my duty."

My reason for calling your attention to this subject to-night arises from a conversation that I have had within the last ten days. A man came to see me in great distress. He seemed to be utterly hopeless. Very frankly he stated to me his condition. He pointed away back when he was a happy Christian, happy in the Sunday school, happy in the church; when he could pray with fervor and sing with melody. And he said, "I never can get back there." I asked him to listen to me patiently. I told him that the road of repentance was not a pleasant path, but it was the road of life and that there was no option in this matter; that as his was a desperate case it called for a desperate remedy, and that he must return to the King's highway which he had abandoned no matter how far, and that if he would come with prayer and confession and abhorrence of sin, and if he would have faith in God, he would see difficulties vanish that seemed invincible by human power.

Have faith in God. I stated to-day what I conceive to be the chief sin of this generation, the lack of moral courage and the lack of simple, implicit faith in God's Word, in the Lord Jesus Christ. I

do not know of any kind of difficulty, no matter what it is, that can successfully oppose sublime, moral heroism, where the soul humbly and lovingly trusts in Jesus Christ for victory. If only there be faith in God speak to the mountain upon thy right hand or upon thy left. Speak to the yawning gulf. Come right up and face the enemy, looking them right in the eye. Do not hide. Do not become discouraged. Do not be afraid. Háve faith in God and do just what the Book says, and the victory is just as certainly yours as that God reigns in the heavens.

Now, if that people, under those conditions such as I have described, found themselves able and resourceful enough, poverty-stricken as they were, and harassed as they were by outside enemies, if they were able in the strength of God to do what they did, then what we need is not so much the external conditions of success as men count it; we do not need to go out and study the clouds to see whether there will be a storm; we do not need to count our enemies and talk about the sons of Anak and their fortified places. All on earth we need is to feel contrition for sin and to have faith in God, and go and do what that Book says do. That is all. Then watch and war and work. Watch against thyself. Watch for God's promises. Watch for the Master. War against the flesh and against the world and against the devil. And work, work, work! Satan finds for idle hands his darkest deeds to be done.

Employment, stringent employment, man needs it. It is a necessity to him, if he ever expects to achieve any great or any good thing. And now that we may have this spirit of return to God in any instance where we have wandered from him, and in order that we may be led to lay aside our dastard fear, and that our faith may be increased to take hold of omnipotence, and that as a church we may do what God's Word says do, let us all fervently pray.

VII

"BLESSED ARE THEY THAT MOURN"

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are they which hunger and thirst for righteousness: for they shall be filled."—Matt. 5:3, 4, 6.

THE importance of the text is very much enhanced from the fact that Jesus, just as soon as he had appointed the twelve disciples and organized his kingdom here upon the earth, in this sermon began to explain the principles of his kingdom, what they were; the kingdom of God, what it means. And among the first things he said were those I have just read. Now, I want to explain in a very simple way the meaning of each one of these, and the power of the application will be as your heart takes it, as you hear it. I don't know which one of you will receive it, but I feel quite sure that somebody here is going to take these words to heart, and that is what we want.

Now, let us look at the first and see what it means. In every one of these statements there is what is called a shell meaning and a kernel meaning; that is, an outside meaning and an inside meaning. When he says, "Blessed are ye poor," the outside meaning is that it is true that poverty is more fa-

vorable to the reception of the kingdom of God than riches. That is true. I mean to say that if a man is a rich man, and by the side of him is a very poor man, the probabilities are that the poor man will more readily see and feel the things of the kingdom of God than the rich man. But that is the outside meaning expressing probability. The inside meaning is this: "Blessed are the poor in spirit." That is absolute. I think I can make you understand what that means, and I will change the words this way first: "Blessed are those that are poor in the sphere of the spirit"—not in the body—"in the sphere of the spirit."

But even that is not all of the meaning. There is no blessing to one who is merely needy in his soul, if his soul does not see and feel the need. The evidence of that is perfectly apparent from this Scripture. I want you to hear it so that you can know whether you are entitled to take the blessing. In the Book of Revelation, where our Saviour speaks to the churches, he thus addresses the church of Laodicea: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would thou wert cold or hot. So then, because thou art lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth; because thou sayest, I am rich and increased in goods and *have need of nothing,* and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable, poor and blind and naked." So that when our Saviour says, "Blessed are they that are poor in the sphere of the spirit," he does not

mean, "Blessed are those that are actually poor there," for these Laodiceans were poor just that way. They were wretched and poor, and miserable and naked, but they did not think so. They thought they were rich. They thought they were invested with all good. They thought they had need of nothing. So evidently he does not mean, "Blessed is the one that actually needs salvation," but he meant this, "Blessed are they who feel their need of spiritual good, who in the sphere of the spirit feel their poverty." That being the meaning, which it unquestionably is, then we may at once settle the question whether there is any blessing for us here this evening, whether we have any title to it.

Now, if in your soul, in the sight of God, you feel that you do not need anything, you feel that you are rich, then there is no blessing in that for you. But if in your soul this evening you realize your poverty, so that your heart will say while I am talking to you, "I am needy there,"—perhaps you may say as far as this world is concerned, "I have a house and shelter, at least, and I have an occupation. I can make a living. But I am not thinking of that, but in my soul I see poverty. I see sickness. I see great need. I feel it. I am not near as good inside as I want to be. I find much fault when I look inside of my soul." Now, if that expresses your condition, blessed are you. There is a blessing for you in this text and I want you to lay hold of it. Now, the question is, what is the blessing? Let us

see what it is that belongs to you if you are in that condition? "Theirs is the kingdom of heaven." What a strange way to prove a title, to satisfy one's pretensions or claims. If there should happen to be a man here this evening who was to tell me that he was wholly sanctified, that man would not need anything, evidently not; if he is what he claims, he does not need a thing in the world, for that is the condition of people in heaven. There is no spiritual poverty with him. He doesn't need a Saviour. He doesn't need a high priest to pray in heaven and say, "Father, forgive him." He doesn't need any more of the power of the Holy Ghost to be applied to his heart, and he can get no blessing from this text.

But the Lord Jesus Christ says that your title to the kingdom of heaven consists in your conscious need of spiritual blessing. The Lord did not come to save full people. He came to save sinners, lost people. Now, whether you are in the church or not, you have, under the clear statement of our Saviour, a title to the kingdom of heaven, if in your heart, if in your spirit, you feel this poverty. Why, brethren, it would be a sad thing to me if I had already gotten to the best that the Lord had for me. My heart cries, "More! More! More!" I need more, and that sense of need in me that continually cries out, "Give! Give! Give!" that calls on God out of his inexhaustible riches and fullness to send me yet more; that is one of the evidences to me

that I am a child of God, the fact that I feel that way. Now, let that sink into your heart. "Theirs is the kingdom of heaven." I must also explain somewhat the phrase, kingdom of heaven. It means the reign of heaven. It means the reign of heaven here on earth. It does not mean heaven as you attain it ultimately. It means that in the government of God here upon earth you are a subject, you are in it, you are one of them. Whoever you may be, if in your soul you do feel that need of more food, more strength, more comfort, more light, more peace, blessed are you. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I pronounce a benediction on you.

Well, let us put over against this conscious poverty of spirit its opposite state. "And the Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself: God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are." Do you see him? Any poverty there, any soul poverty? Why, just look at him! See his self-complacency; see his spiritual pride; see how he is actually worshiping himself. There is no blessing for him. And now, among those who were interested this morning and those who are here this evening, I do press on you the question: In the sphere of your spirit is there a humble estimate of yourself in the spirit? Are you poor there? Do you feel your poverty there?

We pass that point to consider the next blessing. "Blessed are they that mourn." Here again we have the shell and the kernel. It is true in a general sense that the house of mourning has more

roads to heaven from it than the house of feasting. That is true. It is true that in the house of feasting people very seldom turn their thoughts toward God. As a proof of it, how seldom do you ever hear of a conviction or a conversion at a ballroom? How many do you remember? Suppose there is a big banquet spread, a magnificent supper provided, and after that supper music and dancing, and all come out with their best clothes and with their most attractive manner, they meet for enjoyment, their physical or mental enjoyment. Are the conditions conducive to thoughts of God? Now, see another group. There is no joy there. It is a house of mourning. Somebody is dead. Some loved one is dead. The crape is on the door. The valley, the dark valley, is between the bereaved and the heavenly Father. Will not the living lay it to heart? I say that the shell of this scripture is that salvation is more likely to start from that house of mourning than from the house of feasting, because the living at such a place lay things to heart. They do not lay them to heart at the other place.

Another reason is that when we are in the full of physical and mental joy, I mean mere earthly joy, nothing but earthly joy, we are not so apt to feel our dependence on God, but when we are afflicted, when the props upon which we have leaned break, when the chief joys with which we had solaced ourselves have like bubbles burst, or like fleecy clouds float away, then we think more, we look down at

the base upon which that joy had rested, and we say within ourselves, "I ought not to have set such very great store by that. It was pleasant, but it was so fleeting. It is gone before I think about it. Wings grew out on it and it flew away. It is gone from me." And you begin to think, "Oh, are there no joys that will outlast this, that are sweeter while more enduring than this?" And hence it is true that there is greater probability of a man's being led to God from the house of mourning than from the house of feasting. But that is only the shell of what this means.

Now, let us look at the kernel of it. A man might mourn a year in that house of mourning and yet go to death and hell. There are roads to hell from that house of mourning as well as a road to heaven. And a man might mourn because he had lost his money; he might mourn because he had lost his health; he might mourn for the physical death of a babe, and perhaps a much more serious death has taken place already in his family; that son of his is already dead in soul and he is not grieving over that; he is crying over that little babe that the Lord Jesus Christ has already welcomed into heaven, and he is not mourning over the spiritual death which has taken place in his house. But the meaning comes closer than that. It is not mourning so much on account of what we see in others as it is mourning on account of what we see in ourselves. And it follows right after the other thought, that if when

I look in my soul I there see spiritual sickness, spiritual poverty and feel it, and I mourn now, "blessed are they that mourn." Here comes a blessing that, if you mourn on account of your sin, if you mourn because you have despised the goodness of God, if you mourn because of the waywardness and petulance and murmurings and impatience with which you have greeted these afflictions, and the distrust with which you have regarded his providence, and the contempt which you have put upon his grace, if you mourn upon that account, "blessed are they that mourn." That is mourning on account of sin. Sin is that only abominable thing that God hates. And this is why I never expect, as long as I live, to give up that old Baptist idea of mourning. I do not care whether you have a mourner's bench or not, but I do know that in giving up the bench you ought not to give up the mourning. The soul of a sinner shall not come to God except through mourning. They are called upon to mourn.

Let me read you a scripture on that. Hear it and lay it to heart, for I am anxious for you to receive some one of these three blessings. Here it is in the letter of James. "He giveth more grace. God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble. Therefore submit yourself unto God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you. (But how can I draw nigh to him?) Cleanse your hands, ye sinners." Anything sticking to your hands? Any

money that don't belong to you? Is there iniquity in your business? Purify your heart. Do you come to God with a wavering eye, like a fool's eye, looking yonder and everywhere? Do you come with an eye single to the accomplishment of a purpose, not unstable? But here we reach the point in question: "Be afflicted and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourself in the sight of God and he shall lift you up." Blessed are they that mourn. Be afflicted; be afflicted and mourn and weep. Some women were following the Lord Jesus Christ when he was about to be crucified, and women are naturally very sympathetic if they see anybody suffering, and their tender hearts incline them to either relieve the suffering or to show that they sympathize with the sufferer. And so when they saw Jesus going by, staggering under his cross, the mothers (and the mother is more apt to feel this than the daughter) began to weep, the tears began to run down their faces, and Jesus said to them, "Mothers, mourn not for me." You need not weep for me, I am all right, but mourn for your city and your people. There is where the trouble is. There is the true occasion for sorrow. Mourn because of the evil that is in and on the city. Mourn because boys are learning vicious habits and their minds becoming corrupted by their associations. Mourn because little girls are adopting the sentiments and fashions and habits of worldly-

minded mothers. Mourn because the elder men are becoming hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Mourn because gray-headed men with one foot in the grave have no thought of death, or hell, or heaven. Mourn on account of that.

But to bring the matter still nearer, you look within and say as that prophet of God said, when the Lord opened his eyes and he could see in the East and the West and the North and the South people giving glory to God, souls being converted—when he saw that he looked inside and he commenced crying out, "O Lord God, my leanness, my leanness." He began to mourn and be afflicted when he saw how far short he was himself of the requirements of God's holy law. Mourn, ye Christian fathers, because you are so hard to move. Mourn, ye mothers, because your sympathies do not run out for the lost. Mourn, ye young men and maidens, because you are more concerned for some little temporal matter than you are for the salvation of your comrade, who right by the side of you is going down to death. Afflict yourselves and mourn.

Hear the word: "And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye

spare, neither have ye pity: Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women, but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house." (Ezek. 9:4-6.) Here is a blessing of safety on those who "sigh and cry."

And now I want to prove to you that whoever mourns in the true sense has a blessing. Blessed are ye who mourn that way. What is the blessing? Why, here it is. Do take it. It is for you, if you belong to the class of mourners addressed. It is just as much yours as the hat you put on your head or the shoes on your feet. God gives it to you. Lay hold on it. "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." Comfort, take it. God gives it to you. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I pronounce that benediction on the mourner. "Blessed are ye, ye shall be comforted." And what a sweet thing is comfort. I see a man going up into the temple. He goes up a mourner. He goes up feeling his poverty of spirit. He goes up smiting upon his heart. He goes up pleading, "God be merciful to me a sinner." I see him coming down and his face is radiant, and there is joy in his heart and peace in his soul, and the voice of God is speaking: I say unto you he is justified; he is acquitted; the penalty of the law has been removed from him, and never more while the earth stands or the sun endures, never more while the throne of

God survives shall that man come under condemnation. What a comfort is that.

"Tongue cannot express the sweet comfort and peace
Of a soul in its earliest love!
That comfort was mine, when the favor divine
I first found in the blood of the Lamb.
When my heart it believed, what a joy I received,
What a heaven in Jesus' sweet name!"

Oh, how sweet the thought of reconciliation. At peace with God. At peace with God. What if there be war here? What if enemies of an earthly or a diabolical kind gather themselves against me? If God be for me who can be against me? Who can lay any charge to me if God justifies me? If he says, "I pronounce that man justified, acquitted; put the white robe on him, write his name in the book of life."

We take the third and last blessing. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." Now, that also has a double meaning. I mean to say that a man who has not money enough to buy a loaf of bread, and who has to go home and tell his wife that he hasn't a thing in the world to give her for dinner, and when the little children come in hungry-eyed and say, "Is there nothing to eat?" I say it is true that it is more probable that these hungry ones shall

find eternal life than those who sit down and fare sumptuously every day. That is what I mean. That is the shell of it. Full people, people that have all that they want in this world to eat and to drink and to wear, as a rule are not as approachable on the subject of religion as the poorer classes, and on that account you notice that wherever Christ went the common people, the poor people, heard him gladly. He in his sympathy saw all their needs. If they had a sore on the hand he saw that. If one limb was shriveled up so it could not be used he saw that. If they were driven by hard and grinding poverty he saw that. And his heart went out to them. And I want to say this to you, and I mean it, too.

There is a curse of God on any church where the poor do not feel welcome. I think I am a revolutionist on the subject of churches. I do know of churches that have cost $100,000, or half a million dollars, in which only a few exceedingly well-to-do and fashionable people feel at home. I was in one of that kind once, some of whose members could hardly estimate their millions, and of all the dry and juiceless services that ever I did attend, that surpassed them. I was in pain from the time I went in until I went out, and I felt like pushing out the walls to make an opening through which God's poor could come in and feel welcome. Now, that is only the shell of that thought. Here is the inside of it. "Blessed are those whose souls are

hungering and thirsting after righteousness." Now, do not misunderstand this text. This is not the imputed righteousness of Christ here; it is not that at all. Blessed are they that in their hearts hunger to be better men. Blessed are they that in their souls thirst after a more exact conformity to the law of God. That is what this means.

There are places where the Bible unequivocally teaches our justification through the imputed righteousness of Christ. But just here, in this connection, it speaks of the thirst and hunger of the heart to be better ourselves. Now, let us apply this. If you think you are good enough just as you are; if you think that in your every-day life you do not commit any sins, there is no blessing here for you. The fact of the business is, you put yourself outside of the Saviour entirely. He has nothing to do with righteous people. He came to save sinners, and just as long as they need him they are sinners, and just as long as there remains a single lesson to be learned in right living and right thinking and right feeling, it is blasphemy for you to say that you are sinlessly perfect. It is horrible blasphemy. It is more than that. I do not say it, God says it. God says that you have lied.

Now, let us see if you can get a blessing from this. I do not care who you are—preacher, deacon, father or mother in Israel. I press the question on you: Do you count yourself as being already perfect? Is there no more of actual right thinking and

right living and right doing that you hunger for and thirst for? Now, if there is any more, and in your soul—down deep in your heart, you feel that there is, "O that in my heart God's will could be done as it is done in heaven. O that I could get to that blessed state where my thoughts never wandered, where my allegiance will never swerve, where my deeds will be perfect, where my imagination will be holy. Lord God Almighty, my soul is hungering and thirsting after spotless righteousness in my life." Do you hunger for that? Do you? If you say you have gotten it, I have nothing to say to you. I know you are mistaken and deceived. But do you crave it? Then God Almighty gives you a blessing. He says you shall be filled. That is coming, brother. As I told you this morning, the deliverance from condemnation comes now; the being perfected in holiness comes at the last. God's promise will not fail.

Now, I have given you an exposition of three capital points that lie right at the foundation of the kingdom of Jesus Christ, as pronounced by himself, the only authorized expounder, giving his meaning as he gives it. To make it practical I want to put some questions. I pass this around now to the unconverted people. My friends, let solemnity come over you now. Concentrate your mind. And in answer to this question, as I told you this morning, be honest, be honest, be honest, above everything else. You may not be able to understand

your heart, but so far as you do understand it, my friend, do you need to be saved? Are you poor in spirit and do you feel that poverty of spirit this evening? Do you this evening mourn on account of your sins? Do they excite in your heart genuine grief that you have sinned against God? Are you a heart mourner? Is there in you a thirst and craving to be better? Then, I do say to you this evening that if that describes your case the blessing of the Lord be on you. You shall be comforted. You shall have the kingdom of heaven. You shall be filled.

Now, to put it to a practical test. I never was in my life, so far as I can recollect, afraid or ashamed to publicly follow a deep conviction, and I have oftentimes thought that I cared too little for what men thought. But I do know this, that just as soon as I honestly saw myself to be a sinner, when I looked in my heart, and my conscience as a judge said, "You are a sinner. You know you are a sinner," I was willing to confess that—the bigger the crowd the better for me—whether by daylight or night. I am not ashamed to own my Lord; I do not blush to speak his name. I am ashamed of myself oftentimes; I am ashamed of other people oftentimes, but I do know I am not ashamed of Jesus. Now, what I want you to do this evening is this. We want to offer a prayer that the Lord God may bring you in sensible contact with the blessing, "Theirs is the kingdom of heaven and

they shall be comforted." Now, as that publican went down from his prayer justified, we do know that the peace of God is the heritage of every justified man. We do not say that the justified man necessarily takes hold of it as soon as he is justified. We know the Scriptures do not teach that; but Paul says: "Therefore being justified by faith, let us have peace with God." Not "we have peace with God." It is true that peace has been declared, but "let us have" means, first, to take hold of it; and we are authorized to take hold of it.

Some people hold off a good while before they claim their property, and it does them no conscious good until they do claim it and enter into possession of it. Now, what I want to pray for is that there may be a sensible appropriation of the blessing. If the blessing is yours it would seem that you ought not to be afraid to go up and take hold of it. If a house belongs to you you need not send for a stranger to open the door and let you in. It is yours. If a piece of land is yours you will take possession of it. So, now, if any of you do this evening genuinely mourn on account of your sins against God, and genuinely pray: "God, be merciful to me a sinner," and genuinely trust the Lord Jesus Christ as the Saviour of sinners, now we want to pray that the blessing which God has declared to be your heritage shall be felt by you, that you may taste it. There is no objection in the world to anybody feeling good over religion. Indeed, you ought

to, but a great many people do not. The point of the prayer is that you may be made to sensibly feel that yours is the kingdom of God, that God has converted your heart by answering your prayer.

Will you let me make a very homely illustration? Sensation and fact are oftentimes different things. There were some people moving to a new house. They had tied their chickens, tied them tight, until the cords actually made their impress in the legs of the chickens. Well, they came to their stopping place, they were not going any further, and of course the good wife cut those cords. That chicken is free, but do see him lie there for quite a while, not realizing that he is free, lying there as if yet tied, though the cord has been cut. The doctors will tell you why. They will tell you that the sensation of being tied is still there. The circulation is not yet restored. Lift him up and push him about; make him exert himself and see there is no binding cord. So if your heart accepts the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour, God has pronounced you free, and though the devil come up and shake death and hell at you, you tell him that you take God's word against his, and that if God is for you the devil cannot be against you in this matter.

Now, while we sing, everyone that feels poverty in spirit, everyone that is mourning on account of sins, everyone that is praying God to be merciful to him a sinner, will you just come up and take the front seats, and directly, when the rest of us

kneel, we want you to kneel, and we want to offer a prayer here that the blessing may not only be yours, but that you may feel it yours. We want you to take hold of it, take it home with you. That is what we want to pray for.

VIII

NO CROSS, NO CROWN

"A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;" "therefore, God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." —Isa. 53:3, joined to Ps. 45:7.

THIS is a conjunction of a part of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah and of the forty-fifth Psalm, and upon this text I wish to present four thoughts—first, a picture; then a principle; then, an exemplification of that principle; and then, an application of that principle and example to us here to-day.

First, the picture. In every man's soul there is a picture gallery. There, on the walls of his memory, he hangs the images of his heroes and the semblances of the things which have charmed and inspired him. All these pictures are by one artist—his own fancy—and none of them excel or fall below his own conceptions of men and things. This picture gallery is an index of the man's character. It is a revelation of his loves and of his hates. It shows what things he likes to look at; of whom and on what he delights to meditate when left to himself; and to whom and to what he is being conformed and assimilated.

Among these various pictures there are some royal ones that take precedence of others, occupying the central places, and around them the other pictures are grouped, subordinated and made correlative. I have such a picture gallery in my soul. If I am capable of judging what is there, two such royal pictures are hanging on the walls of my memory, around which two all other pictures in my mind are grouped, subordinated and correlated. They are life-size portraits, and are complements to each other. I mean that the first, seen by itself, demands that the second shall be, and the second, seen by itself, requires that the first has been.

The first picture is suggested by the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, and as soon as the eye of the beholder falls upon it he is startled into unspeakable astonishment, because the face of that portrait is marred more than the visage of any man. No other face on this earth was ever marred like that; it looks like a root out of dry ground; it has no form nor comeliness nor beauty to be desired; it is the picture of a slave who had been free, now emptied of all former glory and stripped of all former favor. The picture of a scourged slave, covered with wounds and bruises and stripes. The picture of a scorned slave, whose ear was familiar with hisses and gibes and jeers, and whose cheek had been acquainted with spittle, with buffeting and with smiting. It is the picture of a malefactor, condemned to death, and yet a malefactor who had done no ill.

As you look at that picture it impresses upon your mind that it is the face of one who has been betrayed by his familiar friend—that agony suggests it. It is the face of one who has been sold. It is the face of one who has been sold unto degradation. The loneliness suggested by that picture is appalling. Of the people, there are none with him, not one. It is the picture of one whom nature had repudiated. That sun which did not refuse its light to Pilate and Herod and Judas refuses to shine for him. A supernatural and palpable and horrible darkness wraps him about. It is the picture of one whom God has smitten and whom God has forsaken. It is the picture of a sufferer—earth's greatest sufferer. You look at it and you know those lips have been familiar with strong crying and those eyes with tears. That from those lips anguish has exclaimed, "My God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why hast thou forsaken me? *Why* hast thou forsaken me? What hast *thou* forsaken me for? Why hast thou *forsaken* me? Why hast thou forsaken *me?*" It is the face of the saddest man on earth, in the universe; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

The most startling of all the thoughts suggested by this picture is this: That these pains and sufferings have not come upon him by surprise—he foresaw them. They have not been forced on him—he voluntarily assumed them. They have not been measured out to him over his protest, but with de-

liberate purpose and foreknowledge of all their depth and agony he steadfastly set his face toward them and steadfastly approached them, and steadfastly took them upon himself.

That is why I say that when you look at the first it demands that there shall be another. It is a book which calls for a sequel. It is only the part of a keystone, of an arch, of a column. You cannot look at a face like that and be content to know no more. You say, "There must be a beyond." Now, right over against that face is the other face. "Therefore, God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." And there you have the face of a king who had been a slave. There you have the face of one who had been lonely, now girdled by uncounted and uncountable legions of flashing angels and surrounded by interminable hosts of white-robed, blood-washed men and women, crying, "Hosanna" and falling before him, and ascribing to him honor and power and glory and dominion forever. What a company contrasted with the former loneliness! You see that face from which the smiles of God had once departed, leaving it beclouded, now with a halo of light around it. The eyes which had been dimmed with tears are now like flames of fire. The feet which had been pierced now glow like fine brass in the furnace. The head, on which cruel thorns had been pressed, now wears a royal diadem. The hand that had hung limp and pulseless now grasps the scepter of universal em-

pire. But over and above all is the transcendent thought of his happiness, gladness, ineffable joy, unspeakable satisfaction. As the oil, poured from the sacred horn upon the head of Aaron descended his beard to the skirts of his garments and dispensed the perfume of that holy mixture, so the gladness radiates from his person and fills the world with the thrills and vibrations of his joy. It is the face of the gladdest man in the universe. That is the second picture.

2. Now, let us look at the principle. The principle suggested by the text is this: That in the government of God, in his methods of work, though "sorrow endureth for a night, joy cometh in the morning;" that the cross must precede the crown; that discipline must precede strength; that self must be sacrificed before self is glorified; that to find your life you must first lose it. That is the principle that runs through the whole economy of God—that we cannot take genuine and lasting joy into our hearts unless sorrow has been experienced; that we cannot take honor unless the things which precede honor have been borne; that you cannot be great until you have been a servant; that you must serve before you can be great; that greatness cannot be thrust upon anyone; and that no selfish man, no man who fixes his eyes upon his own glory, no man who reaches out for crowns to put upon his own head, no man who is quick to demand that everything due to him shall be given to him, has taken the first

step down into the mighty principle which God from heaven announced as the crowning principle of his government. That is all I need to say about the principle.

3. Now, the third point. This principle has received its highest exemplification in the Lord Jesus Christ. There is the example. Voluntarily he emptied himself of heavenly glory. Voluntarily he humiliated himself. Voluntarily he became a slave. Voluntarily he took upon himself all of the pangs and anguish of his life here upon the earth; and with a view to the gladness that should ultimately compensate for the preceding sadness. As the apostle Paul says, " But for the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross and despised the shame." Out yonder in the future, far, far away, there was placed a joy, the sweetest, holiest ever felt in any heart. But before that joy, must come the deepest anguish that any soul ever felt.

Now, I want to inquire just what joy was placed before him—the constituent elements of it. First, that sin should be destroyed. Second, that death should die. Third, that the devil that had the power of death should be destroyed. That the prey of the terrible one should be rescued from his hands; that the prisoners should be delivered from their houses of despair, and that the deliverance should be abundant, eternal, certain. That he himself would say, " I am satisfied." Because, when he had poured out his soul unto death, God said to him,

"You shall see of the travail of your soul. Your blood shall not flow in vain; that anguish shall not be like water spilt on the ground; that sacrifice shall not be wasted. You shall have full satisfaction, and by the knowledge of your sacrifice shall multitudes be justified." From yonder and there and everywhere; from black and white and bronze; from rich and poor and great and small; from the noble and peasant; from the wretched and destitute; wherever sin reigns unto death; wherever sorrow, sobs or sighs; wherever anguish weeps and tears blister the cheeks upon which they fall, there shall the power of the triumph of the Lord Jesus Christ come with its compensation until he shall say, "My Father, I am satisfied. This gladness surpasses the sadness. I am satisfied."

4. Now, the last point—an application of that principle and example to us. I read you just three scriptures on it: Matt. 20:20-23; Phil. 2:5-11; 1 Pet. 2:19-23. I could have read you many, but the three were very expressive, very pointed. They say to us that Jesus left heaven and came to earth and was a sufferer, a slave, that men might be lifted up to that heaven from which he descended. And here is what it says, "Let this mind be in you that was in our Lord Jesus Christ." Let that be in you. The second scripture says that we may have fellowship with his sufferings. We may if we wish it; we may if we voluntarily elect it; we may if we are willing to do it, drink of the cup that was presented to him,

and be baptized with the baptism that he was baptized with. The third declares that he has left us an example, but when you profess to follow Jesus and claim the reward of Jesus, then you must manifest the spirit of Jesus. It is for you, if you wish it. I wish to say this to you, and I do not care how far you think I fall short of the standard which I hold up before you to-day. I would not lower that standard a hair's breadth to make it measure just my height. If I fall infinitely below it, let God be true, though the preacher be a liar.

Here it is: You can decide for yourself the measure of your joy. Your joy in heaven, the recompense of the reward that will come to you, may be measured by yourself now. How much of the spirit of Christ in the first part of it are you willing to manifest? How much of the spirit of sacrifice like his, approximately like his, are you willing to furnish in your own case? Well, you must admit this is a practical method of testing. When you are called upon to assist in some self-denying Christian duty, you say, "Don't give me much of that. Let some of the other brethren have that. I do not want much of that self-denying part in mine." All right. Then, do not claim much of the other. There it is. You are to measure it yourself. It is before you. And that is why, in standing before this church, I have tried with all the power I possess and from the deep love in my heart to you and for you, to get you to unselfishly help the cause

of the Lord Jesus Christ the world over, to count not your money dear unto you, to count not your personal service dear unto you, but that you always say, " Lord, let me enter that baptism. I do not ask for a little shallow stream, ankle deep. There can be no baptism in that. Let me go into the deep water. Let its billows roll over me. Let me be overwhelmed by it. Let me only feel that as I enter into that whelming flood I am following the footsteps of the Lord Jesus Christ, and have his Spirit in what I do."

I said to you last Sunday that if there were ten thousand thousand city churches, each building costing $100,000, each one furnished with a magnificent pipe-organ, each one filled with a vast crowd of auditors each Sunday, and these churches only took care of themselves, they would be a curse to the world, that every one of those ten thousand thousand churches would be a curse to the world. There must be an overflowing. Our beneficence must at times find wings; it must fly; it must reach far out, to succor, to help, to save.

And if to-day there should descend on this house, on the heads and into the hearts of the brethren and sisters who stand before me, even a small measure of the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ, so that you should not seek your own ways, so that you should not wish to think your own thoughts, so that you should not desire to obtain what would be merely a personal gratification to you; but if you were pos-

sessed; if the Spirit wrapped you around, enveloped you from the crown of your head to the sole of your foot with this one burning and unquenchable desire, "Lord God, let me lay aside self to save others," then, some day, some future day, you would put the cup of genuine pleasure to your lips; some day your soul would be intoxicated with the true wine of life. Some day the sparkling bubbles on the champagne of pleasure that is not effervescent would be pressed to your lips. Some day, standing yonder, looking backward, you would say, "Lord God, I do bless thy name that I was counted worthy to suffer and to make a sacrifice for Jesus Christ. Oh, I am glad that you put it so I was not left out. I am glad that you impressed me so that I did not diminish and call for a diminishing of the cross that precedes the crown."

But I do want to ask this favor of you: Take these four thoughts home with you; there are just four. You can remember them: The picture gallery, the principle, the example and the application of the principle and the example. Oh, if we could look just now into the picture gallery of our minds, and profit by it. If we could to-day identify and proclaim the royal picture in each gallery! God help us to take first on us the humiliation of Jesus, even if you have to say, "notwithstanding proud man's criticisms;" even if you have to say what Jesus said, "I am a worm, and no man." He said it. That fell from his lips. He descended in humilia-

tion that deep. "I am a worm, and no man." And remember that it was God the Father, who said, "Thou worm, Jacob."

Be humble before God, and exalt not yourself. Be as courageous as you please before men; fear them not. You never will be of much account as long as you are afraid of men. But always be humble when you come before God. Don't stand before him and magnify yourself. Don't stand before him and say, "See, how tall I am!" God help us to possess the mind of Jesus, to suffer, to put self out of sight, to try to help others, to count not our lives and our property dear unto us, in order that satisfaction may come, the joy beyond the grave and in the bright, unclouded home of God. To give special direction to the spirit of self-sacrifice, do allow me yet once more to remind you that the satisfaction of Jesus, the gladness that is to compensate for his sadness is the salvation of the heathen nations. For that his soul travailed in anguish. For their redemption he poured out his soul unto death. You are now his representatives and witnesses on earth. To you he commits the execution of his will.

Why, then, are our hearts so cold to foreign missions? Why our prayers so few and faint? Why our contributions so small and infrequent? "Say not before the angels it was an error." If you have not pledged, make a free-will offering in this behalf. Are you about to leave God's altar barren

of offerings? Will you, dare you, how can you say no to this appeal? Stop, stand, think! Now, look up to heaven where Jesus waits and watches, and ask this question: "Lord Jesus, are you yet satisfied? Is your gladness complete?"

IX

GOD'S HELP IN THE HOUR OF TRIAL

"Because thou hast kept the word of my patience I will keep thee in the hour of trial that cometh upon the whole world."—Rev. 3 : 10.

FIRST, just a little bit of history. When Alexander the Great led the armies of united Greece from Europe over into Asia, the first country that he subjugated was Asia Minor, and there were established in time certain Greek colonies or cities, which preserved the Greek civilization for many hundreds of years. The principal of these were Ephesus, Smyrna, Thyatira, Pergamos, Sardis, Laodicea and Philadelphia, and the last of these was Philadelphia. I mean to say that it was the smallest of the cities. It was remote from the sea. It was up in the mountains. It had not the large commerce of the other places. And yet concerning this city of Philadelphia and its faith the great historians of the world have written much.

About the time that our Lord was passing from childhood into manhood this city was destroyed by an earthquake, an account of which you will find in the " Annals " of Tacitus, and in the " Georgics,"

by Virgil, you will find a reference to it, on account of its vine-growing power. It was a volcanic soil in the mountains, and earthquakes there were very frequent. Volcanic soil generally is good for vine-growing, and the coins of that city generally had on them on one side either Bacchus, the god of wine, or a bacchant, one worshiping Bacchus.

In that most marvelous book, "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," by the infidel Gibbon, in the sixty-fourth chapter of his history, is a very marvelous tribute to the prophecies in John's book of Revelation concerning these seven cities of Asia. I will merely refer to the substance of the statement in Gibbon, and not attempt to quote it verbally. He says that when Ephesus fell the church lost its first golden candlestick, as prophesied by John, and Laodicea followed, and to-day the remains of its circus and its three theaters cannot be traced. As to Pergamos and Thyatira, they speedily fell before the Saracen rising in the sixth century under Mahomet, and the mosque succeeded the church of Jesus Christ. Smyrna, while still extant, is supported by foreign population and trade. I quote from Gibbon: "Philadelphia alone was saved, either by prophecy or by its own courage." That is what Gibbon says with reference to this church of Philadelphia. The Saracen power, the Mohammedan power, rising in the sixth century, culminated in the fourteenth century.

Since that time it has been waning. While all

the other places in Asia Minor speedily fell before the Turkish power, this little town of Philadelphia, in the mountains, in that hour of trial of which this gospel here speaks, defended itself in a war of eighty years. You remember the tribute that the historians give to the Dutch republic because in a war of eighty years it successfully resisted the power of Spain. But here was just a town, a town in the mountains, whose importance grew out of the fact that it was vine-producing and held the way to all of the valleys of Asia Minor. It resisted the power of the Turk in a war that lasted until men grew old and died and children grew up and grew old and died, and when they finally surrendered it was with this condition, that they were to be allowed forever the liberty of religious worship. These are the facts of history. One of the early fathers writes a letter to the church at Philadelphia, and we have in that letter some account of the progress of this church.

Now, our text says: "I know thy works. Thou hast a little *strength*"—not a *little* strength. "Thou hast a little strength. I set before thee an open door. And I will write upon thee the name of my God, the name of the heavenly city, and my new name, because thou didst keep my word, and because thou hast kept the word of my patience I will keep thee in the trial that is to come upon the whole world." The passages of Scripture which I read to you as an introduction to this service are

only a very few of the many in the New Testament concerning patience. "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience."

Over and over again did our Lord in his lifetime emphasize its importance, and he does not mean by patience merely passive subjection. It is an active, enduring patience; to endure, to remain faithful unto suffering, to continue to do well when there is a temptation to be weary in well doing, to remain true to Jesus Christ when on the right hand and on the left hand men are falling away and all the cowardly are running to the rear, and all the self-seekers are dropping out of the ranks; to continue to be steadfast, never denying allegiance to Jesus Christ, and faithfully keeping his word. Now, he says: "Because thou hast done that I will keep thee in the trial that is to come upon the whole world." I wish you would take your Bible some time and study that question of patient endurance, of patient continuance in well doing, of possessing your souls in patience, and of not giving up on account of trials and difficulties, of being faithful in the midst of these trials and difficulties. You will find it a very profitable study.

With this brief introduction there are three leading thoughts upon which I wish to speak to-day to this church. First, who is it that speaks to this church at Philadelphia? The value of what a man says very much depends on what the man is, and before we ask what he said we ask, who is it that

said? The text commences this way: "Thus saith the holy one, the true one, the one that has the key of David, having power to shut and no man shall open, and power to open and no man shall shut."

Now, here are three things concerning the speaker: His holiness, the infinite purity of his character—surely a commendation, a word of praise, is dependent in value upon the character of the one who commends. We are expressly forbidden to be the hero of fools. We are warned to shun the applause of the evil. We are not to count it a matter of glorification if the wicked shall praise. But if one who was spotless when all the world was spotted, in whose lips never was guile, who kept the law of God with infinite perfection, who is absolutely perfect in his purity and in his holiness—if he speaks a word of praise it ought to be treasured on that account. It seems to me that a plaudit from his lips ought to be prized above any crown which a fallible human judgment may offer to place upon our brows, and down deep in our hearts, as the highest honor that can be voiced in speech, is a word of praise from infinite holiness, that the pure and holy God shall say, "Well done."

In the next place he is called the "true one." This refers not so much to his veracity as to his fidelity. Of course, every word he speaks is, "Yea, yea," and "Nay, nay," and there is no deviation from truth in what he utters, but he is also faithful.

If never a word of double meaning fell from his lips, if he never held out a hope that he did not fulfill, if he never spoke a promise that he did not verify, if he never gave an invitation and then repudiated it, if always he was exactly true to what he says, and he says, "Well done," that is worth having. And that is why we are not asked to have as the standard of our righteousness what father says, what mother says, what brothers and sisters say, what friends say, what human courts say, but Lord God, thou alone art true, and not only holy and true, but the record says that "he has the key of David."

I shall not stop to expound the passage in prophecy to which this scripture seems somewhat to refer, but the key of David, as set forth in that prophecy, allowed the one who held it to be the mediator between the people and the inhabitant of the palace. If a man wanted to get into the palace he must go to Eliakim, who held upon his shoulder the key of David. If Eliakim opened the door to him he could go in; he could have access to the king. If Eliakim shut the door in his face there was no way for him to find a passage to the king. This is David himself and he has the key, the key of knowledge, the key of authority, the key of power, the key to open anything and to close anything, without any question as to either his authority or his ability.

Now, when you add to holiness and truth such

power as that, when you unite those three characteristics in the person who speaks a word of commendation, certainly they enhance the value of the word spoken. If a man wishes good for you, but has no power, no matter what he wishes he cannot fulfill. He may indeed say that you are entitled to the office of governor, or of president of the United States, or to hold this or that position, but what does it signify? He cannot open the door and let you in. He cannot shut the door in the face of your competitor. But our Lord, who can unlock *hearts, as he did that of Lydia,* who can open the door of faith, as he did under Paul's preaching, who can open wide the door of opportunity, as he did at Ephesus, who has the keys of death and hell, when he says to a church, and singles that church out and speaks no word of blame, and the only one to whom he does speak no word of blame, when he singles out a little church and says, "I know thy works. Thou hast been faithful. I will keep you. I will take care of you," then that is a blessed commendation and precious assurance.

Having determined the character of the speaker, let us consider what he states, in two ways. What did he speak by way of commendation, and what did he speak by way of promise? The commendation is, first, negative. There is no blame falling from the lips of Jesus for the little Christian church in Philadelphia. When he speaks to one of the others he says, "I have somewhat against thee.

Thou hast left thy first love." When he speaks to another church he mingles with the praise which he gives it the sentence, "But thou hast there them that hold to the doctrine of Balaam." And when he speaks to Laodicea, "Thou art neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm."

Now, the absence of any censure when Jesus speaks to a church is very strong commendation, but negatively given. He says, though, as if in contrast with a thousand others, "Thou hast never denied my name." Peter denied him once. The church at Philadelphia never did deny the name of Jesus. Neither Roman nor Saracen could make it abjure the name of Jesus. "Kill me if you will, I will not abjure my faith in Jesus Christ. I will not swerve a hair's breadth. Go bring your legions and let them tear down the walls of our city. Let them efface the site of its imposing buildings. Let them imprison our bodies. Let them confiscate our property. Let them separate father and son and mother and daughter, but Jesus we will never, no never, deny." "Thou hast not denied my name."

It suggests a scene after the heavens are rolled together as a scroll, after the mutations and vicissitudes and checkered incidents of time are succeeded by the immutable things of eternity, when before the great white throne Jesus will call to such an one and say, "Because thou didst not deny me on earth I will not deny thee now. Father, behold my

friend. Many repudiated me. Many that ran well for a season stopped on account of the burden or the heat of the day. Many because of the Nicolaitanes allowed their love to wax cold. But here is one, I confess him before God and before the angels, and in the light of the joy of eternity, who never did deny me."

Positively what was his commendation? "Thou hast a little strength." The others had wealth, had numbers, had everything that is usually relied on in estimating the sum of human ability. But "thou hast a little strength." Thou hast spiritual strength. They with all of their boasted numbers and wealth and power succumbed when the pressure was brought to bear. Under the fierce heat of persecution their courage melted and they ran away. But "thou hast a little strength." Like the mountains which girded thee around thou didst stand—mountains whose summits clouds touch, whose sides whirlwinds enwrap, and with which they wrestle—"thou hast a little strength," thou didst stand. Then he says by way of further commendation, "I know thy works"—not, "I know thy words," not "I know thy professions"—I know thy works. The seed that was sown in good and honest hearts brought forth fruit in patience. I know thy fruits. I shall not stop to ask how many blossoms there were. I shall not stop to inquire how thick was thy foliage, but I know thy fruits. I know the

result. I know the outcome of thy Christianity, and I have no word of blame. It is good fruit.

Next, he says, "Thou hast kept the word of my patience." The word of his patience simply means the word that he has spoken concerning patience. I read you his word from the tenth chapter of Matthew, twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, eighth chapter of Luke, twenty-second chapter of Luke, second chapter of Romans. The word of my patience is the word that I have spoken concerning patience. "Thou hast kept it." A great many keep the starting words, but thou hast kept my word, keeping on, holding fast, enduring to the end, bearing all things, believing all things, hoping all things, never surrendering, never saying die. Thou hast kept the word that I have spoken concerning patience.

I know a good many Christians who have kept a great many words of Jesus, but never kept the word that he said concerning patience. "Tribulation worketh patience." "Add to thy faith knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience." "The patience of hope." How few of our brethren keep the word of Jesus Christ concerning patience. Now, here was a little church that did it, and when the Roman power began to succumb, when the empire had been transferred from the seven-hilled city of Rome to the Bosphorus and Constantinople became the seat of empire, and when this fell before the power of the Saracen, and

like locusts in great clouds these men of the desert came with the Koran in one hand and the sword in the other, sweeping everything before them, when Ephesus and Pergamos and Sardis and Thyatira all collapsed in a moment before the oncoming power of the Mohammedan, thou didst stand.

I will not deny Jesus. I keep the word of Jesus. I fly the flag of Jesus. It was the fourteenth century before that town made a surrender to the Mohammedan power, and when they surrendered in a civil sense they did not surrender in a religious sense. As the powers that be, you may take these walls on which our citizens have died for eighty years. You are stronger than we, take our walls. You cannot take away our God. The condition of surrender that we make is that you must not put the finger of power upon conscience. We must have the liberty of worshiping as we choose. Because they did not surrender that it seems to me that these are high words of praise.

Now, let us see what the Holy One, and true one, and the one that has that marvelous key, let us see what he said by way of promise. First, "I set before you an open door." Hell cannot shut it. Man cannot shut it. I will speak of that door in only two senses, the door of access to God, as when Eliakim held the key of David, and opened the door of the palace to permit one to go in and confer with the King himself. "I have set before thee an open door." There shall no intermediary stop

you from direct and instantaneous communication with God. You have a pass-key, not only to the throne of the King, but to the heart of the King. Come whenever you want to come, on any mission. Come with any kind of plea. Come at any time. If it be night, come. If it is a time of sickness, come. If it is a time of war, come. If it is a time when death reigns, come. The door is wide open. Come to God. If any man doeth his will, God heareth him.

There is something in that. It does not mean to say that God utterly shuts himself out from any prayer of the sinner, when that sinner is praying in the direction of his bettering, but there is something in this, that faithful Christians have more access to the throne of God than unfaithful Christians. It means that. It means that when they pray there is power in their prayers, and when extremities come, and difficulties like great clouds gather and cover them in folds of darkness, and the foundation seems to shake, and men's hearts are failing them for the fear of things that may come upon them, the faithful Christian can kneel down on the shaking place and say, "Lord God, hear me," and the door is opened, wide open. But it seems to me that there is a higher sense still. "I set before thee an open door." That is, a door of opportunity. You have a work to do as a church. There is a mission to accomplish. Now, if hindrances block your way, if impediments stop the

progress of your march, then what can you accomplish? But before you, oh, church at Philadelphia, I have set an open door of opportunity. Here it is. Speak to these people. The way is open. Speak to this other nation. The way is open; open to the ends of the earth, open to the very depths of sorrow and sin, open to the mouth of the pit. The door is open. Go in it and go through it, and go out and do what God commands you to do.

What a heritage, when Jesus, who is holy and true, and holds that key, unlocks to any place the door of opportunity! It has been said that one time opportunity comes to every man, and that opportunity has wings, and, swift flying, never returns. But when Jesus speaks to a Christian, "I open to you an opportunity, and I will enlarge it, and I will keep it open. Stand and speak for me," it is open this year, it shall be open when this king dies and that government is destroyed. It shall be open when storms sweep the ocean and earthquakes rock the land, open to do good, open to approach Jesus, open to save souls. "I have set before thee a door of access to God, a door of opportunity to do good."

What else did he promise? "I will keep thee." "Thou hast kept my word that I spoke concerning patience. Now I will keep thee." Don't you be uneasy about that. Not a hair of your head shall perish. I love you. The divine arm shall support you. Thy place shall be undergirded with the props

of everlasting *doctrine,* and promises shall shine on your home as many and as bright as stars shine on a cottage in the wilderness. "I will keep thee." When an enemy comes from any direction, if it be from the malice of man, I will keep thee. If the slanderer comes and would befoul thy name and besmirch thy character, I will keep thee. And if the devil shall come to sift thee as wheat, I will keep thee, and if death shall come, be not afraid of it, I will keep thee. Through the deep waters I am with thee, I will keep thee. When the dissolution of soul and body takes place, I will keep thee. I will never forsake thee, no, never, never!

The hour of trial, that comes upon all the world, in that trial I will keep thee, and when this fiery trial comes, scorching and burning up everything before it, and it reaches thy hearthstone, I will bid it stop; I will quench its flame; I will bring thee out of that fire like gold refined in the furnace. Not a hair of your head shall perish. And I will write on thee, here is the sign manual, here is the official signature, here is the mark of discrimination, here is the seal which sets you apart as holy, I will write on you, the name of my God; that church is God's church; that member of that church is God's man; and I will write on you the name of the Holy City. That means that you are a citizen of heaven. That means that your citizenship is inalienable, that it cannot be forfeited, that no power of earth or hell can strike your name from the Lamb's book of life,

from the roll of freemen; you are free now, henceforward and forever, you have a right to walk through every street and glory in every joy of that heavenly inheritance. And I will write on you my new name—my new name. It sounds like the baptismal formula, Father, Son, Holy Spirit. It sounds like the benediction—the love of God, the grace of Jesus, the communion of the Holy Spirit. I write on thee the name of my God, the name of my city, and my own new name.

But I have not time to enter into that. A sermon is worthless if it has no application. Merely to present a picture for men to look at and go away and forget; merely to hold up for the esthetical pleasure of a listener a glorious doctrine, a heroic story, that amounts to nothing; but if when a thing is presented it becomes valuable on account of what can be deduced from it, if it becomes profitable on account of what can be applied to us, then indeed has it a genuine worth. Let us look at the application. I am going to speak about this church. I have earned the right to speak about it. Years ago a missionary came and established it, five members. Oh, what changes since that time, and what trials! There came the Civil War, when all the foundations of society seemed to be swept away. The church stood. There came a fire and burned up the building. Now, when they looked upon the ashes of their desolation did they keep the word of God's patience? Did they keep God's word concerning

the doctrine of patience? I remember. I was your pastor then, and we took this position, that we will not allow this fire and these burdens that have come upon us through the flames to cause us to swerve one hair's breadth from our duty to any other work. "Thou hast kept my word concerning patience." Patient continuance in well doing. It lasted four years; it cost us $35,000; we were poor, and yet during that four years, and paying that $35,000, no member of this church could be found who had the courage to get up in a conference and plead this burden as a justification for failure in any other duty whatsoever, but the church put itself upon record and said, "Instead of lessening our contributions to other departments of the cause of Jesus Christ we will increase them. We do not want to get out of the habit of doing right because a sudden and awful burden has come upon us." I know a case right now.

Years ago I went before a church (I won't call the name) of great numbers and wealth, and I said, "Brethren, here is a great work. Will you help?" "Well, we would, but we are just about to commence building a church," and from that day until this the *anticipation* of the burden of building the church has kept them from doing their duty, and they haven't got the church yet, either. They have hidden behind a purposed sacrifice that lost the name of action and never matured, in order to fail in duty toward a plain and palpable command

of our Lord Jesus Christ. You never did that in your life, never. "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I will keep thee." I have seen you pass through another trial. It is a very serious thing when long established pastoral relations are abruptly sundered. Sometimes it is best to do it, but it is a considerable trial on a church.

Mark this: Any man is a failure as a pastor who is hard to follow. Any man is a failure as a pastor whose work goes to pieces if he turns loose. I do bless God that this is a church that has stood and can stand any kind of change. There is one name higher than any man's name, higher than any pastor's name, higher than any name of affection ever whispered by human lips, the name of Jesus, and I believe you would stand if you did not have a pastor for a year, because you have not been built up around a man, but around the truth. "Thou hast kept my word concerning patience." Henry Ward Beecher eclipsed the world, but Henry Ward Beecher died, and everything went to pieces; everything. Why? It was built around Henry Ward Beecher. That is all there was to it. It could not go on.

Now, whenever a church says about any man, I don't care who he is, "If you go away everything will tumble to pieces," they confess in that declaration their lack of true allegiance to Jesus Christ, and they do pass condemnation on the work of the man. A church built on right principles, taught to

look to Jesus, and to exist for him and to be patient in his word and in his work—why, that church is never expected to make any little change a ground of failure in a great duty. Ephesus might do it; Smyrna might do it; Thyatira and Pergamos might do it; Laodicea might become lukewarm, but surely, Philadelphia is not dependent upon this or that man, and can stand, though the hosts of the Saracens come against it with the Koran and the scimitar, though fires burn and earthquakes throb. You do not expect Philadelphia to turn away from the words of patience, because this or that man stepped out of the ranks. I do not hesitate to say that I am prouder of the record of this church on that point than of all others put together. It is a very weak little affair whose existence is dependent upon a nurse. But you can stand.

Let us bring the application still nearer. I know there has been a drought all over Texas. I have heard it a thousand times—a drought, a shortage, this year, but you are not going to plead that. This church surely cannot be scared by a drought. True, you have not had a pastor for months, and have had to depend on anybody you could pick up, as you have done to-day, for temporary service. In many cases that might serve for an excuse, but it won't do for you. You cannot plead that. I know well that some of you have unexpectedly had placed on you a very heavy financial burden, but you cannot plead that. Leave that plea to the raw recruits.

Veterans never seek exculpation when a duty is to be done. They go right on and do it, notwithstanding the pressure.

You have had a great many vicissitudes here. I express my conviction that this is the most important pastorate in the whole South, and its maintaining the access to God, its availing itself of the door of opportunity which heaven has opened wide before you, largely depends upon the personal integrity of the members, their common sense, their pure and undiluted Christianity, their fidelity to the fundamental principles of the government of Jesus Christ.

So the special application is, now is the time for taking up our State mission collection. Now, if one of you off by himself has for a moment thought of sheltering under some kind of a plea, don't speak it out loud. Don't tell it. Wait until you get over it, and do not even dig a hole in the ground and whisper it there, lest weeds may come up, whose whistling by the power of the wind may tell your secret of shame. You want to do your duty as a stalwart church of Jesus Christ for State missions. There never was a time in our history when we could afford as little as now to step aside from our duty. The work has been enlarged wonderfully. It has been assailed. It is standing on trial. It has been blessed of God beyond any human expectation. It seems that this door that the Lord has opened to us is wider than any of us are able

to measure, and we must go into it. You have opened up a door in this institution of learning that shows a vista so far-reaching, and so high climbing and so glory crowned, that it dazzles the eye to look up to it. Do not let us lose an inch. Do not let us turn aside an inch. Don't let us lower the flag an inch, and don't let us whimper an atom. Let children cry. Men and women in Jesus Christ do not want to plead the baby act. They want to be true to their allegiance to Jesus Christ in every time and in every hour. I know this church can pay that $1,000 the secretary asks for. We can pay it. The Master said, "I have set before thee an open door, the door of access." Let us go in now, right up to the throne, and put the case before him in prayer. Let us pray, and then give the $1,000 and be done with it in five minutes.

X

ENCOURAGEMENT TO PRAYER

"I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth; I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain. I the Lord speak righteousness, I declare things that are right."—Isa. 45:19.

THE exposition of this text presents some exceedingly broad views of the government of God. The children of Judah at this time were captives in Babylon. They were an utterly broken people. Their own city was destroyed and its temple. They were in bondage to a world-empire, that, so far as human wisdom could discern, was absolutely invincible. The people themselves, the children of Judah, were exceedingly degraded in their own estimation and in the estimation of others, by their sins, their long-continued bondage. Looked at humanly, it did not seem that one would speak sincerely who would say to these slaves, these degraded slaves in Babylon, "Seek the face of God." There seemed to be no chance of moral recuperation. One would seem to be insincere who would say to these people, "Ask God to deliver you from the power of Babylon, and restore you to your own country, and enable you to rebuild your temple and re-establish the worship of the

true God." No conditions that the human mind can conceive of, short of absolute impossibilities, could be harder than the circumstances surrounding these people when God said to them, " Seek ye my face. Seek my face for the purpose of securing forgiveness of your sins. Seek forgiveness, the absolute blotting out of every iniquity which you have committed. Seek my face with a view to your escape from this bondage. Seek my face with a view to the restoration of your city, the rebuilding of your temple and the re-establishment of its worship." The declaration of the text is that God did not say " Seek ye my face in vain," and that it was not a command promulgated simply because it was right, with no possibility of its being obeyed. It was not said in vain. Let us look then at the difficulties in the way, that seemed to make that commandment vain.

The first difficulty was the seemingly invincible power of the world-empire, Babylon. How are you to pray against that? All the controlling influences of the world centered in Babylon. The power of the world was here. The city itself was deemed impregnable. In the whole world-horizon there could not be seen a banner that might be hopefully lifted up against Babylon, and yet Babylon must be overthrown before these people would receive or could receive what they were commanded to seek in prayer. Who, then, could overthrow Babylon? Now comes the first thought that shows the

broad lines upon which the government of God rests. He says: "I have called one by name who shall break the power of Babylon. He is not yet born, but I can name him. His name will be Cyrus, and I have girded him, though he doesn't know me; and I have holden his right hand, though he doesn't know me."

In other words, God was raising up an unconscious instrument of power, sufficient to overturn the world-supremacy of Babylon. It is sometimes flaunted in the face of the Christian religion that a great many fine sayings can be cited from the heathen, and a great many instances of virtue and integrity. They say: "Look at what Confucius said. Look at what Socrates said. Look at what Cyrus did." Granted; but there never blossomed a virtue in the human heart, there never bloomed a grace in human life, there never was an instance of sterling personal integrity, there was never an instance of righteousness on any line, that was not superinduced by the Lord God himself. "Cyrus has not known me, but I have girded him. The qualities that are to make him a great general, the character that is to make him a mighty prince, the principles which are to make him famous and admirable, and that are to qualify him for the accomplishment of the great work set out before him, I gave him these. He does not know it. He was under my influence when he thus grew and matured. That temperance, that self-restraint, that physical

training, that moral training, which laid the foundation of his greatness, that was my work." O Lord, verily thou art a God that hidest thyself. So says this scripture. And yet they say, "Look at this instance of heathen excellence," and put it up in contrast with something to be found in Christian lands, as if excellence anywhere is not the fruit of the Spirit of God.

See how broad, then, is this view of God's government, that he touches all the forces—even though he hides himself in touching them—that work changes and bring about revolutions in this world. If Spain, for instance, shall become morally rotten, if decay has gone on in the body politic until there are no more wisdom and power left in it, it is not an accident that an occasion arises between Spain and some young and mighty government, which, by one blow, shall shatter into fine dust all the remnants of her power and her glory. It is the government of God. When God said to those children of Israel, in bondage, "Seek ye my face," it was equal to the saying, "I am greater than Babylon. I have power to break up the chain of your bondage. I can raise up one who shall come and receive without the firing of a shot the surrender of this impregnable city," and it is true that to his generals the gates of Babylon were opened without the battle stroke.

Now, whenever mighty events are brought about, seemingly by accident, you may know a hiding God

is back of them, touching springs here and there, pushing out forces; and although man may see only natural causes operating, yet this hiding God is moving and bringing about the ends which he has purposed. Moreover, when that seeming accident occurs, events cannot stop at that one event, nor revert to the old status. For example, political parties in the United States may meet and pass resolutions concerning the Philippine Islands, and put their folly in platform resolutions. They may say, "We will turn them loose; we have taken them, but we will turn them loose." That might be true if there were no power back of you. That might be true if there were no ends to be attained beside your little pleasure, your designs, your commerce, your dollars and cents.

"Verily, thou art a God, that hidest thyself." He said to Israel, "Seek ye my face," and Israel's unbelief said to him, "How can I pray God to remove the insuperable barrier of the Babylonish domination? How can I ask God to break a world-empire and shatter it to atoms?" God says, "I never did in vain say to you, Seek my face. If I tell you to seek my face and ask me that these bonds be broken, no matter if natural, physical, moral and spiritual impossibilities stand in the way, God never speaks in vain." If he tells you to ask him for anything, take him at his word. Ask him, seek him, and if it be necessary, a Cyrus will be raised up.

Let us look at the next point. How could that degraded people, even if consent could be obtained to return to their land, and to rebuild their cities, and even if the money would be gratuitously furnished for defraying their expenses on their return to the promised land, how, out of such elements, can you rebuild a nation? God declares: "I call upon you to seek my face and ask me to do that thing. Do not look at your sins. They are multitudinous, they are crimson-dyed, they are long-continued. There is not a thing under heaven that you deserve at my hand. It is not for your sake, O House of Israel, that I do this, but for my own name's sake I will restore you to that land, and will have that city rebuilt, and will re-establish that temple. Ask me that it may be done, and I do not say, Seek ye my face in vain."

That seems to me to be a greater miracle than the other. The revival of Judah is more marvelous than the downfall of Babylon. Now mark, for here comes another broad line of thought, when God says, "I called thee, O Cyrus, before thou wast born, and named thee before thou wast born, and when thou wast unconscious of it I was girding thee and holding thy right hand, and, invisible to thee, I was opening gates before thee, and giving power to thy army for the accomplishment of these purposes; thou didst not know me." Then he did it for the religious purposes back of it. Hear him in the text: "I have not spoken in secret, in a

place of the land of darkness. I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me, in vain. I the Lord speak righteousness. Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, ye that are escaped of the nations. They have no knowledge that it was for you I did this."

And what is the outcome of it all? Let us see to the end of this line of thought. It is expressed here: "I have sworn by myself, and the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that to me every knee shall bow and every tongue shall swear." Here, then, back of all human exertion, and back of all kaleidoscopic presentations of seemingly chaotic views of men and their purposes, is the great purpose of God, to bring this whole world under the domination of his Son. Therefore it was not an accident that an entire fleet should have been destroyed in Manila harbor without the loss of a man. It was not an accident that another fleet should be destroyed south of Cuba with the loss of only one man. It was not an accident that the battleship *Texas* and other vessels of our navy passed over twenty-five or thirty contact mines and rubbed against them without an explosion. It is not an accident that to the new Western power opportunities are opening up in Oriental seas, in that great, populous part of the earth, where men now are going East by the way of the West—it is not an accident that seeming miracles are being accomplished.

And do you suppose that these things are happening in order that a few trusts and monetary combinations may be made richer? There is a reason higher and nobler than that, and that is, that every knee shall bow to God and every tongue shall confess his name; that old-time superstitions which have spread their dark wings over people, and left them in a benighted condition for ages, shall be dissipated as fogs and mists roll away before the rising sun. The time has come when the truth of God shall reach men's hearts, when the religion of Jesus Christ shall be published in the places of ancient idolatry, and every tongue shall say, "The Lord is God, and beside him there is no other."

We come to the next thought: If, notwithstanding the governmental difficulties in the way, and the moral difficulties in the way, growing out of the people's sins, it was not in vain that God said to them, "Seek my face; pray that these things shall be done," can you not make an application to your own case? Let me do somebody some good here to-day. Let me speak a word of comfort to some sad heart. Have you supposed that your way is to be dark all the time, and that there is no morning coming; that it does no good for you to pray; that you are in such a backslidden condition that you cannot get back to the Lord? Now, if God says to you, "Seek ye my face," then he does not say that to you in vain. There are no difficulties

that may not be removed. There is nothing in your little individual case that is at all to be compared to the mighty and complex problem presented in this text. If God says to you, a backslidden Christian, "Seek my face; I will heal all your backslidings; I will graciously blot out all your iniquities," don't be discouraged. Don't for one moment suppose that God ever speaks an insincere thing. Question, if you will, the fact that the sun shines; question, if you will, your own existence; but do not question the veracity and sincerity of God. And if he says to you, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be as high as the mountains, they shall be as fine dust in the balances; though they are more in number than the leaves of the trees, they shall be utterly and forever extinguished in the mercy of God," do not doubt his word. He never yet said, "Seek my face" in vain; never.

In a little chapel, a primitive Methodist chapel, an exceedingly ordinary building, there is in one of the pews on the right hand side of the church from the pulpit, a tablet which says that right under this tablet, August 6, 1850, Charles H. Spurgeon heard an ignorant preacher, who seemed to occupy the pulpit that day by accident, read this forty-fifth chapter of Isaiah, and heard the words, "Look unto me, all ye ends of the earth, and be ye saved," and he was saved right then and there. If God does not in vain say to Israel "Seek ye my face," then

God does not say in vain, "All ye ends of the earth, look unto me, and be ye saved." There is no vain word that comes from God. In thinking over that one instance of the broad deduction from the first fact that God never said to Israel in vain, "Seek ye my face," it follows that he never said to anybody, "Look unto me and be saved," in vain. It follows that when he said, "Go ye into all the earth and preach the gospel to every creature," that he said it sincerely. It follows that when he said, "Every tongue shall confess and every knee shall bow to me," that it was not in vain, and that a man is without faith who will preach concerning the salvation of the heathen, and in his heart all the time say, "It is in vain. It is in vain."

Now I want to make the last application. For myself, I have no doubt of the government of God. I am sure he will bring this whole world under the sway of the gospel of peace. I am sure that wherever the blood of Christ touches a soul, that that soul will be white forever. I am sure that however far a child of God may wander away in sin, if the Lord says to him, "Return, O backslider, return!" he does not say it in vain. I am sure of that. But here is the point. If God does command all the ends of the earth to look unto him, and to look unto him for salvation, some one here to-day, some end of the earth, might look to-day, as Spurgeon did, and find that God has not spoken in vain—some lost soul.

Oh, that to-day, because he is God, and there is none else, you would look to him and be saved. He does not speak to you in vain, and not vainly did he say, "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked." Not vainly did he say, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Not vainly did he say, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Not vainly did he say, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." There is no insincerity with God. If he tells you to seek him, seek him, and do not look at the difficulties. Do not consider them a moment. True, they may appear to be insuperable, but there is nothing impossible with God. Oh, if his word to-day reaches your heart and speaks to your soul, "Seek my face," sinner, believe that it is not spoken in vain. Call on the Lord. Ask him this day to break the bondage of sin that holds you, and to set you free in Christ Jesus. Now, it does not matter who you are, nor what your condition is. There is some word of God for you in this book, that suits your condition. If it be a condition of sorrow, if of fear, if of fearful sin; if of bondage to evil habits, that have bound you hand and foot, I say to you there is a word of God that speaks to you and for you, and that word is not in vain. Seek God's face this day, and find deliverance from the trouble of your heart.

XI

VOLUNTEERS, NOT CONSCRIPTS, FOR THE ARMY OF JESUS

"The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion; rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning, thou hast the dew of thy youth. The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."—Ps. 110:1-4.

THE first four verses of the 110th Psalm embody four cardinal doctrines. These are the doctrines selected for the present discussion. It may be allowed to preface the opening of this particular paragraph in the Psalms by a more general statement concerning the whole collection. Many of these sacred songs are Messianic; that is, they are prophecies forecasting the times, person and work of the long-expected Messiah. Some of these, indeed, refer primarily to contemporary persons and events with a distant and more extensive application to subsequent ages. But others evidently refer primarily to the Messiah and his work. They are not susceptible of local application, by any fair method of interpretation. Prominent in this latter class are the 2nd, 16th, 45th and 110th Psalms—all prophetic—some of the prophecies already fulfilled,

some in process of fulfillment, some yet awaiting fulfillment. Some of these Messianic Psalms foretell the passion of the Christ, others his resurrection, others picture his ascension and exaltation; for example: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted, ye everlasting doors, and let the King of Glory come in! Who is the King of Glory? I, the Lord, mighty to save," while yet others portray his enthronement and investment with universal sovereignty. You recall under this last head the 2nd Psalm: "Yet have I left my King upon my holy hill of Zion," which finds a parallel in Daniel: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came unto the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." It also finds a parallel in our text: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool. . . . Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies."

Before embodying the doctrine of the first verse of our text into a clear proposition, let us first understand the import of certain words: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Who here is represented by "the Lord"? Who, by "my Lord,"

the person addressed by the first "Lord"? And who by "my" the prophetic historian? What is the signification of "sit," and what the import of the phrase, "at my right hand," and what the duration of "until," and when, historically, was the second Lord placed at the right of the first Lord? Let us briefly answer these important questions. "The Lord" is evidently God, the Father, the Ancient of Days. "My Lord" is evidently Jesus, the Messiah. The prophetic historian who said "My Lord," is unquestionably David, "the sweet singer of Israel."

All this appears from the evidence of Jesus himself: "While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How, then, doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool. If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?" And it further appears from many subsequent testimonies of the apostles. The term "sit" expresses rest after finished work. It indicates that the great work of expiation culminating in the death on the cross was forever completed. The phrase "at my right hand" clearly teaches two things: First, that Jesus is invested with the divine sovereignty of the universe, all power in heaven and earth, in order to make sure the full fruition of his expiation for sin on the cross. Paul thus expresses the thought in his letter to the Ephe-

sians: "Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church." (Eph. 1:20-22.) And again to the Philippians: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Phil. 2:9-11.)

Our Lord himself claims this sovereignty and makes it the predicate of his great commission: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Second, the phrase "at my right hand" indicates the place of his sovereignty. It is heaven, the Father's home. As Peter says: "Whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." (Acts 3:21.) It was there that dying Stephen saw him. "But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and

said, Behold, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God." (Acts 7: 55-56.) And it is there "the spirits of just men made perfect" keep company with him until the resurrection of their bodies: "But ye are come unto Mount Zion and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect," (Heb. 12: 22-24) and, "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." (1 Thess. 4: 14.) So that the phrase, "at my right hand," means that Jesus, after his humiliation and death, his resurrection and ascension, was not only crowned with glory and honor in heaven, but abides there as an enthroned Providence, a providence of omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence, holding in his hands the whole government of the entire universe. So Peter expresses it: "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us unto this day. Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This

Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens, but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." (Acts 2:29-36.)

But to advance in the thought let us ask, What is the duration of "until"? How long will Jesus, invisible to us on earth, remain in heaven? Our text answers: "Until I make thine enemies thy footstool." So it is expressed in the letter to the Hebrews: "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man." (Heb. 2:8-9.) And again, in the first letter to the Corinthians: "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be

destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." (1 Cor. 15: 24-28.)

For reasons to be set forth later, let us impress on our minds with all possible emphasis that Jesus must remain in heaven, and there exercise his rule, throughout the gospel dispensation. That when he comes again, he comes not to extend the opportunity of salvation, but to close it forever. And the door of preparation is shut. (Matt. 25: 10.) He comes then for judgment and vengeance. So testify the Scriptures: "When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (Matt. 26: 31-34.) "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels, for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink;

I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." (Matt. 25:41-46.) "And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day." (2 Thess. 1:7-10.) "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom." (2 Tim. 4:1.) "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which un-

godly sinners have spoken against him." (Jude 14, 15.) "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them, and I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them, and they were judged every man according to their works; and death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." (Rev. 20: 11-15.)

So that the first great doctrine of our text, the doctrine of the first verse, is that our own Saviour, Jesus of Nazareth, in his risen and glorified body, and from his throne in heaven, now rules over the entire universe. How can we sufficiently grasp the thought? How can our timid, shrinking hearts, so often failing us on account of fears and doubts and forebodings, be made to realize this stupendous doctrine! Can we approximate realization by dividing the whole thought into parts so that our finite natures may grasp it part by part? Jesus is alive to die no more. Jesus is King of kings. Jesus is Lord of lords. Jesus is God. Jesus is Providence,

making all things work together for good to them that love God. He is head over all things to the church.

To prevent a misunderstanding just here we answer one more question on this first doctrine. If, as an historical fact, expiation for sin was not accomplished until Jesus died on the cross and his exaltation and enthronement followed his resurrection, then what about the people of the Old Testament times—were any of them really converted—were their sins actually forgiven until after Christ's death? There is no difficulty here to one familiar with Baptist Articles of Faith or the teachings of the Scriptures. A homely business illustration will make the matter clear: A owes B ten thousand dollars and can't pay it. C intervenes as a mediator, asking B to charge A's debt to him (C) and that in five years he will pay it. B having confidence in C's ability charges him with A's debt. Accepting C as a substitute, B releases A at once. So that the debt is remitted against A as soon as imputed to C, though it is held against C until he actually pays it five years later. Thus sins were not expiated Godward until Jesus died on the cross, but have been remitted manward in every age of the world on penitence toward God and faith in the Messiah—Substitute—whether before or since his coming. Historically, Jesus, as the Lamb of God, was sacrificed for sin only about 1900 years ago. In the mind of God he was accounted a "Lamb

slain from the foundation of the world" and as such was preached, and as such was accepted through saving faith, by Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David and every Old Testament saint. On this line Peter, speaking of people and their gospel privileges long before the Christ came into the world, has said: "For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." (1 Pet. 4:6.)

Resuming the discussion let us approach the second great doctrine of the text: the means by which Jesus, in heaven, rules among his enemies. How does he propose to put his enemies under his feet? What is meant when it is said, "Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies?" By what means is this ruling to be accomplished? The answer uncovers our second doctrine. The second doctrine is that the means employed for putting his enemies under his feet are those expressed by the phrase, "The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion." God the Father shall send the rod of the Saviour's strength out of Zion. What Zion? Is it the heavenly Zion or the earthly Zion? Not the heavenly but the earthly. Not Mount Zion in Jerusalem, but the spiritual Mount Zion here on earth, his church. From Jerusalem shall go forth the word of his law. And what is the rod of his strength? As John in his apocalyptic vision saw Jesus, it is said

that there issued from his mouth a sharp two-edged sword, with which he would smite the nations.

The sword of Jesus and the "sword of the Spirit" are one. The enemies of Jesus are to be overcome by the gospel, vitalized by the Holy Spirit which came down from heaven. As it is expressed in the great commission, "All power in heaven and on earth is given unto me. Therefore go ye." Who go? Angels? Shall the bright myriads of flaming spirits that girdle the throne of God descend in one dazzling swoop to put Christ's enemies under his feet? Not they. "Go ye." Who? Christ's people here on earth. They are to go. Go to do what? "Go, make disciples of all nations." How make disciples? By preaching the gospel which he gave to them. "God said unto my Lord, I will send forth the rod of thy strength out of Zion. Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies." So that the ruling is to be done, not by salvos of artillery, not by the rattling fire of small arms, not by the push of the bayonet, not by the swinging saber, not by any of the enginery of death employed in human and carnal warfare. No, "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but almighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." It means that there shall be employed no thumbscrew, no rack, no dungeon, no proscription, no external compulsion, but the enemies of Jesus Christ are to be subdued by the spiritual power of the gospel which the church preaches. And, therefore, it is said "that unto

the angels and principalities in heaven shall be made known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." God's wisdom exhibited in his conduct of affairs upon this earth is rolled up into a mighty scroll, and the angels cannot by foresight or by any revelation given unto them foreknow what this wisdom is. They can only learn it by studying attentively the progress of the church in the proclamation of the gospel; and as the church unrolls and pulls out the many folds of the wisdom of God, they, up yonder, looking down, see the unfolding and become acquainted with the manner in which the Lord Jesus Christ, through the gospel, is ruling among his enemies.

I wish here, with great deliberateness, to take the position that the only means ever to be employed on this earth for the conversion of any man is to preach the gospel blessed of God through the Holy Ghost. I mean to say that these conquests do not wait to be accomplished until our Lord comes the second time. They are to be accomplished in his personal absence and under the administration of the Holy Ghost, his vicar, his vice-gerent here upon this earth. They are not to be accomplished by the miraculous displays which shall attend the second advent. That is a pre-millennial vagary of the imagination not predicated upon a just construction of God's word. Whatever nation is to be evangelized is to be evangelized by preaching what you, who hold the truth of God, announce in the gospel of Jesus Christ; and

not one inhabitant of this earth shall ever enter the pearly gates of heaven that does not enter through the virtue of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ on earth and proclaimed in this gospel. When he comes again, he comes not for the purpose of converting men. The power that he displays at his second coming is to be in flaming fire, taking vengeance upon them that know not God and look not for his appearing.

How does that fact bear upon the mission of this association? This way: If there should linger in your mind the thought that the nations of this world are to be converted to Christ by his second coming, then that would mean, not through sending out the rod of God's strength out of Zion, in plainer words not through a preached gospel. That would mean that Christ's vicar, the Holy Ghost, had failed as Christ's vice-gerent on earth in carrying out his purposes. That would mean that what the truth, blessed of the Holy Ghost, could not do, miracles, mere manifestations of power, could accomplish. And what is the practical effect of that thought? Why, if you are expecting to see the world grow worse and worse until Christ comes, and then be converted by the miraculous power then to be displayed, will you not say in your heart, " Why should I go? Why should I contribute? Why should I endeavor to lead the world to Jesus Christ, since it is not only an impracticable thing, but a thing contrary to the fixed purpose of God, who intends

to accomplish that very thing by a different instrumentality?" But what is the effect if you believe it as announced here? This effect: That if your commission extends to all nations, and if you are to make disciples of all nations by preaching the gospel to them, and if that gospel is to be blessed by the Holy Spirit, representing Christ in his personal absence, and there be no other means, then the world is lost if you do not be missionaries. Recreant are you to the high and solemn obligations which your blessed Lord imposed upon you.

If, then, Jesus rules among his enemies by "sending forth the rod of his strength out of Zion," and if that "rod of strength" is the gospel, let all our trumpets sound this note: "Awake! Awake! Put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem!" "Arise, shine; for thy light is come and the glory of the Lord is risen. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes roundabout and see: All they gather themselves together, they come to thee; thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee; the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee. Who are these

that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows? Surely the isles shall wait for me and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from afar, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the Lord thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee." (Isa. 60: 1-5 and 8-9.) Let our united prayer be: "God be merciful to us and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us; Selah. That thy way be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations." (Ps. 67: 1-2.) Because from the depth of my heart I believe that the only hope of ever reaching anybody, who can be reached, is through the carrying out of this commission, therefore I have no election, no option. I must be a missionary. I dare not count the cost and stand appalled at the difficulties in the way, but going out with the rod of God's strength and smiting the strongholds, say to the isolating walls of China, "You cannot bar out the light that shines in the gospel of Jesus Christ;" say to Japan, "You cannot isolate yourself by legislation hostile to the reception of Jesus Christ." Say to the enthroned idolatries and superstitions that reign over a large part of the earth: "You must fall before the gospel of Jesus Christ, and not before the sound of the trumpet that wakes the dead at the second coming of Christ."

But one may ask, "How does that comport with such scriptures as this: 'Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?'"

(Luke 18:8.) There is no difficulty in the passage. In the original there is a definite article before "faith," which, according to all the rules of grammatical construction, must be construed as a demonstrative pronoun. "When he cometh, shall he find that faith on the earth?" What faith? The faith that he had been discussing in that parable. His people were becoming discouraged because their ways were not vindicated, and he is telling them to pray importunately, because God will hear his elect that cry, day and night, unto him. "Though he seem to tarry, he will not tarry." When he comes, will he find that faith on the earth, or will he find his people discouraged on account of the "loosing of Satan during that little season" when the armies of hell are marshaled against the camp of God and they see for the time being the glorious triumphs of the millennium overshadowed by the vampire-hosts of Satan, and they will become discouraged and say, "Why will not God hear? Why do the righteous perish and none lay it to heart?" Hence the question: When he comes, will he find that faith on the earth, the faith that against appearances, the faith that under difficulties, the faith that, when the enemy are coming in like a flood, will say: "The Lord God omnipotent reigneth. He does hear. He will deliver"? That is the faith of that text.

We have discussed so far the doctrine of the sovereignty of Jesus Christ, exercising absolute government over the entire universe, but exercising it per-

sonally absent from this earth, though spiritually here; exercising it as sitting enthroned at the right hand of the majesty on high; and that the means by which he is to put his enemies under his feet is by sending forth the gospel, or the rod of his strength. Now, let us look at the third doctrine as thus expressed in the text: "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness; as from the womb of the morning thou hast the dew of thy youth." The doctrine of that phrase expresses three characteristics of God's people. First, "They shall be willing in the day of his power," whatever that means. Second, they shall be in the beauties of holiness, whatever that means; and third, they shall be as drops of dew coming from the womb of the morning, whatever that means.

Now, let us see if we cannot get clearly before us these three characteristics of God's people. Our old-time Baptist preachers construed "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power" to mean that when the Holy Ghost puts forth his irresistible grace to convert a man, he makes that man willing to be converted. That is a glorious doctrine and it is strictly true, but there is not a shadow of reference to it here. I would be willing to risk what little reputation I have as a scholar that this is what the passage means: "Thy people shall be volunteers in the day of thine army." "Power" there is used in this sense; what is the "power" of France in time of peace? An army of 700,000 men. With

what "power" did Napoleon invade Prussia or Austria or Egypt? The whole psalm is a war-song. The King is up yonder, but by his "power" exercised down here he is conquering his enemies. He is conquering his enemies through his people, who are his soldiers. And in the day when he draws out his armies, his people shall be volunteers, not conscripts. The best scholarship of the world gives that as the true sense of the original text. And what a grand thought! No conscripts in the ranks of God's hosts; only volunteers. That is the true doctrine of the Bible. You cannot make a man do Christian work by coercion. You cannot draft him into the service of Jesus Christ. He must be no conscript. And if I were able I would write on the walls of every church in letters not only ineffaceable but in flame unquenchable, "God's people shall be volunteers." Volunteers in this fight, volunteers in putting Christ's enemies under his feet. It refers not to any process of conversion, but it refers to the attitude of mind of those who are converted, those who are God's people. They shall be volunteers. In my own congregation there are doubtless a few who have the spirit of conscripts. When the trumpet sounds, when the leader's voice cries out in clarion notes, "Fall into line and forward march!" there are some (I thank God, just a few and an ever-diminishing number) who cannot be brought into line; you have to send a corporal of the guard after them.

But when you get them into line that way, they are not worth anything. You needn't try to win victories with them. When an ancient leader of God's host looked upon his great army, many thousands of men, he saw white faces that indicated white livers; he saw pallid lips of arrant cowards; he saw some devoid of moral courage who were turning longing, lingering looks back to the home behind. And with a true conception of a great leader he halted his column and said, "Let every man go home that wants to go. Let them go. God's people shall be volunteers." And when they left him but a handful, he illustrated that with that handful of volunteers "one could chase a thousand and two could put ten thousand to flight." Oh, if in our missionary enterprises we could realize that it is a thousand times better to have half a hundred that are born missionaries (I refer to their second birth), every drop of blood in their veins missionary blood; volunteers from the crown of their head to the soles of their feet! O Heaven have compassion on one whose name is enrolled among the saints that is a laggard in the day when God draws forth his army. "Curse ye Meroz, curse it with a bitter curse, because it came up not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty." And I tell you, all ye collectors of mission money, if you will speak to converted hearts and trust to the power of the Holy Ghost regnant in those hearts, you will readily secure the Lord's money for the

Lord's purposes. Have I not tried it? Do I not know? I have seen my people take a Holy Ghost collection calling upon no unconverted help, calling upon no unwilling contributor, throwing the responsibility of giving exclusively upon the redeemed and blood-washed hearts, God's children, "Will you volunteer?" and I never knew them to fail to respond. And at home we never do go beyond ten minutes in taking up any sort of a collection, because we do not want anybody but volunteers and if they be volunteers they will come in a bunch, and that is the true conception of raising funds for Jesus Christ.

Let me impress one thought a little more on the point of volunteers. Pizarro had great earthly wisdom. When he saw that the hearts of his men were failing for fear of the supposed dangers coming upon them, there on a little island, a narrow sandbank off the coast of the mighty empire of the Incas of Peru, when he saw that they were already whipped in their hearts, he acted wisely to draw that historic line in the sand with his sword and say: "Whoever will volunteer for Peru, living or dying, come over this side of the line. The rest of you go home." Thirteen men only stepped across the line, but that day decided the overturning of the superstitious idolatry of Peru. That was the decisive battle. And so when Travis, in your own Alamo, heard that the dust that rose from the feet of the coming hosts of Santa Anna shrouded heaven, a black flag at the head of the column, he saw it

would not do to have any cowards, any conscripts, and he drew a line in the sand and he said, "Whoever, for the salvation of the women and children in our frontier settlements that have not got time to get out of the way, whoever will remain in the Alamo with Travis, living or dying, come over on this side of the line." And dying Jim Bowie turned to his friends and said, "Pick me up and carry me over on that side of the line." He was no conscript. Volunteers! I tell you that the sublime audacity of faith, evinced by the courageous man standing upon a great principle, though every star in heaven is eclipsed, will win when half-hearted measures insure defeat.

Now I turn to the second characteristic of God's people, in fighting this war. "In the beauties of holiness." What does it mean? Its primary meaning, its typical significance, is derived from the habits worn by the priests when they brought their offerings—when they came themselves for service and brought their offerings. Every one of them had on a white robe. There was not a spot on it. Fine linen, pure and white, signifying that in going into the courts of God they should be clean. What is its significance in the revelation of John when he got a glimpse of the army? "I saw a great multitude which no man could number out of every tongue and kindred on the face of the earth, all of them clothed in white robes." Connect with this passage of Revelation wrongly given in the common version,

"Blessed are they that do his commandments that they may have a right to the Tree of Life," but in the true text that reads, "Blessed are they that wash their robes that they may have a right to the Tree of Life." My people shall not only be volunteers but blood-washed men, clean men, cleansed in the blood of the Lamb by the power of the Spirit of God; in other words, holy people. And I do venture to affirm that in this connection the exclusive reference is not to the Baptist idea of imputed righteousness; more than that is involved in it. Thy people, who go out to wage thy war, shall not only have been washed white in the fountain filled with the blood of the Redeemer, but practically in life must be clean people on questions of morals; not thieves, not liars, not slanderers, not traducers, not evaders of just obligations, but good men. For that is what the doctrine of grace teaches, "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men," "teaching us," what, my brethren? "Teaching us that we should live soberly, righteously and godly." When and where? "In this present world." And wherever God's people cannot maintain the reputation that they are good men and women, then they are about like conscripts. They cannot bear the vessels of the Lord in their moral and spiritual uncleanness. And that is why, when you hold a revival meeting, before you start out for conquest against the enemy, to rule over the enemy with the power of the gospel, you turn to your backslidden church

and you say, first let the people of God become revived and forgiven and then can they teach transgressors God's way.

What is the third characteristic of God's people here set forth? I will read it: "As from the womb of the morning thou hast the dew of thy youth," says our version. And what a beautiful sermon Mr. Spurgeon preaches from this text on Christ's youth, applying that language to Christ; that Christ is always young, the same yesterday, to-day and forever. His idea is scriptural. But this text does not hint at it. The word "youth" here is plural. "Thou, Jesus in heaven, hast an army of young people as multitudinous as the dew that comes from the womb of the morning." "Youth" is plural. Thou hast a host when thou leadest forth thine armies, volunteers, holy, multitudinous. Now, I want to give expression here to one of the deepest convictions of my soul. "Are there few that be saved?" And the pessimists quote Christ's answer: "Broad is the road that leadeth to death and many there be that find it, and narrow is the way that leadeth to life and few there be that find it." And they construe that language, given on a special occasion to a Jewish audience, and speaking with reference to the effect of his gospel upon them at that time as universally applicable, and that always it shall be, only here and there a traveler on the King's highway; whereas, if they had turned just a little further on, where he speaks of his work, not on a

limited Jewish scale, nor in a definite section, and says, " Many shall come from the east and from the west and from the north and from the south and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God." Few, indeed, are those first fruits of the Jews; as John in Revelation puts it, 144,000, comparatively few; but when he comes to tell the number of them that came from the east and the north and the south and the west, of the Gentiles, his eye gets dim trying to look down the length of the line, the countless hosts, and no man can number them. Oh, the sands, the waves of the sea, the quivering leaves of forests and bright stars shining in the heaven, ye cannot equal in number the true descendants of Abraham.

And I will tell you that when the outcome is reached, as Dr. Taylor rightly expresses it in his book touching that parable, the number of the finally lost shall be, as compared with the saved, about as the number of prisoners in our jails compared to the people that are not in jail. Do you suppose that the devil will get the majority? As from the womb of the morning thy young people are like the dew. Who can count its drops as the sun-tipped jewels garland the heights of Lebanon and its adjacent valleys? Why, in the millennial time, when by the providence of God pestilence and famines and wars, which so depopulate the earth, have ceased, and when Satan is chained, no longer to suggest his devilish thoughts to weak men, in one year of

the millennial period there will be more people on this earth than in a thousand years of the past. A thousand thousand years it will equal, if you count population as in the past. So vast will be that number that when you look to Israel, whose few were saved in the beginning, you shall see all Israel turning to the Lord and the whole Jewish remnant, dispersed and scattered people, they shall be volunteers yet in the army of Jesus Christ, and from the rivers unto the ends of the earth the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the world as the waters cover the great deep. And I don't think that the beginning is far off, but that beginning is not to be ushered in by the second coming of Christ. Christ's coming is the last thing. With that come the resurrection and the judgment, and separation and final destiny. But in the glory of that thousand years, oh, what a joy it will be to be a preacher. Each heart will say, "Lord Jesus, I volunteer; oh, let me go not to the brush as a skulker, but to the front where the battle rages fiercest and death reigns as in a carnal war. O Lord, I volunteer to the forlorn hope." That is the only spirit that can conquer the world. And in the missionary work of our church, I tell you I would not be caught in the brush; I would not stay back with the baggage; I would not try to find an easy place in the quartermaster's or commissary's department; I would not seek the position of a sutler; but, Lord Jesus, when the bugle sounds and our brethren are already in the

field, oh, let me not stand idle!" Now, these characteristics of God's people make the third doctrine; they shall be volunteers; they shall be holy; they shall be multitudinous.

So we turn to the last doctrine of the text, the fourth doctrine. Let us see what it says: "The Lord hath sworn and will not repent. Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." Zechariah saw a priest on the throne of a king: "Thou shalt be a priest on thy throne." If this priesthood's functions are exercised here on earth, where is the temple? He entereth not into temples made with hands, nor into a holy of holies that is but typical of the true, but he enters into the true holy of holies in heaven. There as a priest he exercises forever his functions. And what are they? It is the office of a priest to present the blood of the sacrifice. Where shall we find the altar on which that atoning blood is sprinkled? Listen to the scripture: "Ye are not come to a mount flaming with fire, which might not be touched, but ye are come unto Mount Zion, into the heavenly Jerusalem." Who else? Unto God, the Judge. Who else? Unto an innumerable company of angels. Who else? Unto the spirits of the just made perfect. What else? Unto the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things for us than the blood of Abel. There, in the true holy of holies, the High Priest enters and offers his own blood.

That is one function. What is the other? In

the type God's people are represented as coming up to the temple and kneeling down, while the priest goes inside, and just as long as he is in there they kneel, and they know that they must not get off their knees while the bells are ringing that are attached to his garments. But when he comes out they get off their knees. The praying is over then. What, then, is the second function of his priesthood? To make intercession for his people. His people where? Down here. What are they doing? Fighting a battle, not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers in high places. How circumstanced? With foes to the right of them, foes to the left of them, and foes to the rear of them, and foes to the front of them; and on all sides batteries thundering, and over them and under them have gathered the powers of evil. And every now and then some poor Christian begins to doubt, and he drops down on his knees and bells tinkle up yonder. What is the priest doing? "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." When does that intercession cease? Why, don't you know? The last chapter of Revelation tells us that in the new state of affairs there is no temple. That means that sacrifices are ended. That means that there is nobody any longer to pray for. That means that there is not a man or woman within the reach of prayer who has not passed beyond the need of prayer, and there is no temple there. That is after the priesthood ends. That is after the King

who had reigned until the last enemy was put under his feet, turns around and surrenders the kingdom to God the Father. Now, it may be that people sometimes think they are now in a place where there is no temple, no need for the blood, no need for the intercession. Whenever you get there, you have graduated, but, oh, my God, keep back from my heart the presumptuous thought that I am in that state until the priesthood ends. As for my poor self, dissatisfied every day, sick, sick at heart, when I think of the miserable life that I live compared to what I ought to live, for myself I say: "Lord, keep on praying for me. O thou High Priest in the Holy of Holies, I need thy intercession."

And now here are these four doctrines. The present government of the Lord Jesus Christ over the whole universe. His subduing his enemies through the gospel. His people possessing the characteristics of volunteers and holiness, and multitudinous in numbers. And finally, the priesthood lasting up yonder until the warfare is over, and when the last enemy is put under his feet.

Oh, brethren of any name, if you are volunteers, if inside you are Christians, if God for Christ's sake hath forgiven your sins, when winter is on you and its biting blasts chill you through and through, then remember that we will have a warmer home up yonder. When summer's suns scorch you and you are ready to faint, choked by the dust of the weary day, oh, brother, sister, don't be discouraged. Jesus

is King, and in just a little while you will be where neither sickness nor sorrow, nor pain, nor death shall ever come, and there will be no night there, no night. Oh, how ravishing the prospect and anticipation of that glorious consummation! Roll round, ye wheels of time, and bring that glorious day. But while I stay here, Lord, help me to fight a good fight. Help me to keep the faith. Help me to hold that which God has intrusted to my hands, and whatever fate may befall, Lord God, grant that as I have lived since conversion, so when I die I may die a volunteer in God's army. Let me not die the death of a conscript.

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